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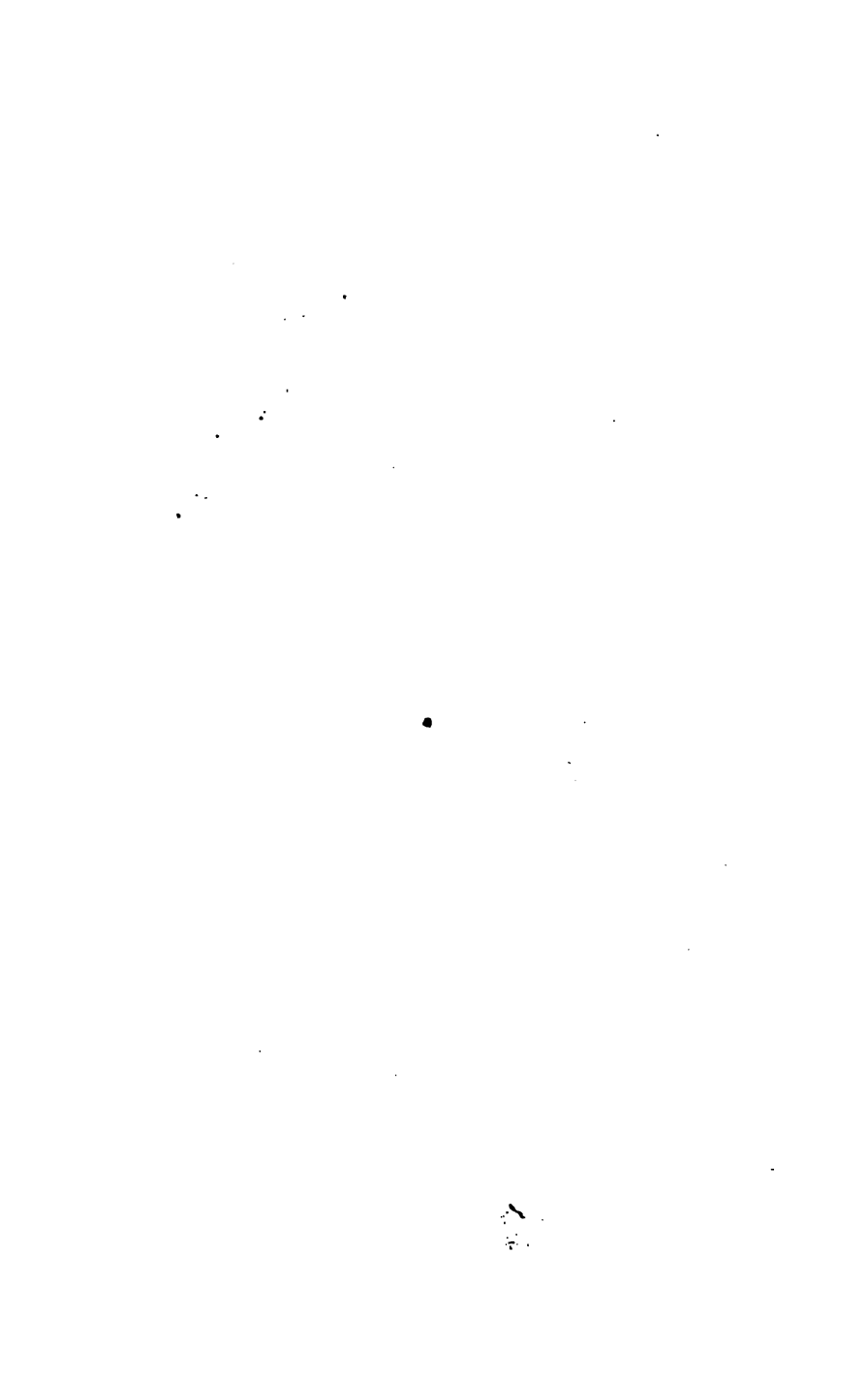




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Wednesday, 14 June 2006

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FRONTISPIECE.

HIDDEN TREASURES;

OR,

THE HEIR OF HOHENBERG.

EDITED BY

FREDERICK HARDMAN,

AUTHOR OF "PENINSULAR SCENES AND SKETCHES," "THE STUDENT OF
SALAMANCA," ETC.

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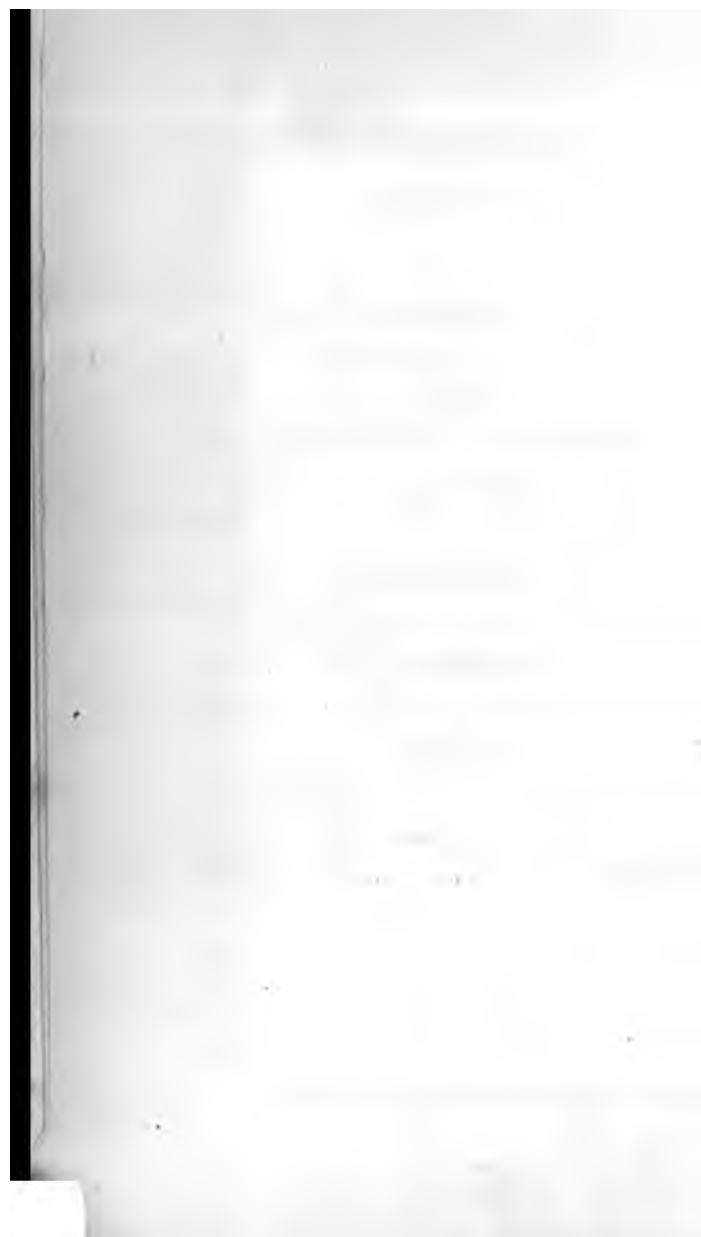
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HIDDEN TREASURES;

OR,

THE HEIR OF HOHENBERG.

CHAPTER I.

THE FLIGHT THROUGH THE FOREST.

IT was on the sixteenth or seventeenth day of October, of the year 1806, that a small covered cart was seen slowly journeying along a wretched forest-road, full of ruts and holes, which led through the dells and valleys of the Harz mountains. The grey horse that drew the cart, a gallant and handsome beast, seemed utterly exhausted, and made but indifferent progress. Though a keen and cutting wind blew down from the mountains, the poor animal's coat reeked with sweat; flakes of foam were on his flanks, and he panted painfully at every step. From time to time he stood still, shook his head as if in utter dis-

couragement, and turned his large intelligent eyes upon his driver, as though to ask whether he had not yet done enough.

“See you not,” the brave animal appeared to say, “that I am weary to death and can go no longer? Willing I am, master, but the power fails me. May I not enjoy at least a single hour’s rest?”

The appeal was unmistakeable and affecting, but the necessity of progress was doubtless great, for the mute prayer remained unheeded; and, after scarcely a minute’s pause, the weary grey had once more to struggle and stumble on through the stiff mud, and over the deep tracks of wheels.

The driver of the cart was evidently by no means insensible to the sufferings of his staunch but harassed steed. He used no harsh means to goad him to exertion, nor were any necessary; for the horse, when he found his silent petition disregarded, again pressed onwards, as though determined to do his duty to the last; and, if needs were, to die in harness at his master’s bidding. The latter strode stoutly by his side, patting his graceful head and slender neck, speaking encouragingly to

him in the gentlest and most caressing tones his naturally gruff voice could assume, and at times even apologizing to the faithful brute, whose strength he felt he was overtasking.

"My brave Ali," he said, "forward, forward! only up this hill, and then we can take it more easily. You have held out so gallantly, my good horse! One more effort, but one more, Ali; we shall soon be at the top! Well done, good brute! One more struggle for your king! You won't desert him in his hour of need, any more than your old master; will you, Ali? We must carry this through, though it cost us our last breath. Must not let ourselves be caught by the rascally French, whom Heaven confound. Would not like to carry a Frenchman, would you, Ali? They would not treat you well. You don't understand their language, and they would whip and spur you. No, Ali, no; into such hands shall you *not* fall, so long as I can help it. You and I live and die together; and if we could only once get fairly into the forest, we need not care for a whole regiment of the French frog-eaters, though they were close upon our heels. So forward, Ali, forward!"

And forward paced the noble horse, though his sides heaved and his hard breathing was painful to hear. Forward, through thick and thin, he dragged the small but heavy cart, until he reached the foot of another ascent, which, although not very lofty, was very steep, and opposed to his further progress difficulties that seemed insurmountable. The driver coaxed and patted him, spoke to him more affectionately than ever, but could not get him to stir from the spot. The poor beast was too thoroughly exhausted. More than one attempt did he make to ascend the abrupt hill, but all was in vain ; his vigour was gone ; and after a desperate exertion and a few scrambling steps, the cart rolled down again to its former station, dragging with it the struggling and weary horse.

With grief and anxiety stamped upon his features, the driver gazed at the hill, then at the cart and at the over-driven horse, which trembled in every limb. Then he turned round and looked back along the road he had come. From the elevation upon which he stood, he could see to a considerable distance. With the searching and experienced glance of a veteran soldier, well used to war and its stratagems,

he examined the road, keenly scanning every bush and copse in its vicinity, even to the very horizon. The result of his investigations was seemingly satisfactory. He nodded his head, as if somewhat relieved from his apprehensions.

"We shall do yet," he muttered to himself. "We have got the start of the *parley-vous*, and Providence will protect us, and not suffer the rich prize to fall into the hands of the foreign robbers who ravage our poor country. This morning they were hard at my heels, but now, as far as I can see—and my eyes are still tolerably sharp—not a single blue uniform is visible. You are right, Ali; we may allow ourselves a little repose. Rest yourself, my poor brute, rest yourself! we have still many a weary league to get over before reaching Magdeburg, where alone we shall be safe from the French. So take a few minutes' rest, my old friend and comrade! And when once we are at top of the hill, and the road gets better, we will make up for the quarter of an hour lost. Poor beast, how you pant and sweat! Hungry, too, you must be. Come, we will divide our ration, and share alike our last bit of bread."

From an inside pocket of the grey cavalry cloak, laced and turned up with red, which enveloped the old driver, he took a lump of bread which would hardly have sufficed to satisfy the appetite of one hungry man. Breaking it into two equal portions, he laid the one half on a flat rock by the roadside, and broke up the other into small pieces, which he offered to his horse. The fagged and half-famished animal ate greedily from his master's hand, and neighed gently, as in token of his gratitude. Such at least was the interpretation put upon it by the old driver, who looked kindly at the horse, and again patted his neck.

"Yes, yes, Ali," he said, "you are a grateful brute, and take a dry crust from my hand as kindly as ever, in better days, you took a lump of sugar. Ah, Ali, will those days ever return, now that the accursed French have overwhelmed our Prussian bayonets in that terrible fight at Jena! Alas, alas! what a day was that! Alas, that I should have lived to share such shame, and to see, with these old eyes, the brave Prussian battalions sent to the right about and shewing their backs to the enemy! And to what enemy? To those beg-

garly French, whom we drove before us at the Rossbach with our horse-whips! Ah, if the great Frederick, our old Fritz, had been at Jena! Such a disaster is enough to make him turn in his grave! But if he had been there things would have gone differently, aye, very differently! We soldiers have not to blame ourselves for the misfortune,—no indeed, that have we not! No, no, the old Prussian valour was there, but old Fritz was wanting. Our arms were as strong and our hearts as stout as in the year '60, but generals were wanting,—old Fritz was wanting, and old Ziethen and Seidlitz and the others! Only the Brunswick was there, and he was no longer the same man as formerly. Oh, the shame and the stain that have fallen upon the honoured uniform of Prussia! Alas, alas! that I should have witnessed the disgrace!”

The veteran soldier—for as such did his Prussian uniform, and his scarred and martial countenance, as well as the words he had just spoken, proclaim him—leaned against the shaft of the cart and abandoned himself to the bitterness of his grief. Covering his face with his hands, he groaned audibly, and had any

been there to observe him, they would have seen the hot tears ooze through his fingers and fall glistening upon his thick grey mustaches and old horseman's cloak. He wept like a child at the thought of the tarnished fame of the Prussian army, and of the misfortunes in store for his country, which the recent defeat at Jena had delivered, a defenceless prey, into the hands of the ambitious ruler of France. So great was his emotion, that his tall, gaunt frame, still active and vigorous, quivered with its violence.

A few minutes elapsed. Suddenly the grey horse neighed gently, turned its head towards its master, and laid it caressingly on his shoulder. At the touch the old soldier started from his mournful reverie, looked kindly at the horse, then threw his arms round its neck and kissed its broad forehead. As if relieved by the burst of grief to which he had given way, his eye was now brighter and more hopeful, his voice more cheerful and confident.

"Right, Ali!" he cried, "I see that you would fain console me, and would not have me discouraged. Is it not, Ali? Well, well, you are right enough. It is no use despairing.

Their turn to-day—it may be ours to-morrow. We must wait patiently, like men and soldiers, for better times, and trust in a merciful Providence, who will not suffer brave old Prussia to be for ever under the feet of the foreigner. We *will* wait, Ali, resigned and undismayed, for better days and for our turn. They must come. It cannot be all over with Prussia's honour and freedom ! Something tells me, Ali, that we shall live to see a change, and to see the last Frenchman driven from Prussian soil. They attacked us without provocation, and they have triumphed without justice, and now they overrun our country like locusts, pillaging and destroying. But God is just, and will cast down the wicked in His own time. My daily prayer to Him shall be, that I may live to see the day of Prussia's liberation !”

Whilst the veteran thus spoke, with impressive earnestness and solemnity, the grey horse seemed to listen to him, occasionally tossing its head and giving a low neigh. The soldier now sat himself down upon the rock, and took up his piece of bread, as if about to eat it. But instead of so doing, he looked hard at it, and

then again at his horse, turned the bread in his hands, and at last rose to his feet.

“I would rather be hungry a few hours’ longer,” said he, simply. “I can bear it better than Ali, the poor brute. Come here, old fellow! You have a heavy load to drag, whilst I have only to run beside you, unburthened. There, eat it, boy, and much good may it do you!”

The second half of the bread disappeared like the first, crushed between the horse’s powerful teeth; whilst the old soldier buckled his sword-belt a hole or two tighter, as if he would thereby have stilled the cravings of his stomach, which, after a long fast, began to make themselves painfully felt. Then he again sat down upon the rock, and remained for some time buried in thought, until he was roused by another neigh of his horse, louder and more significant this time than before.

“What’s the matter, Ali?” said he, sharply, and in an instant was upon his feet. “Ha! I almost fear we have lingered here too long. What is that down yonder?”

Placing his hand like a shade over his eyes, in order not to be dazzled by the sun, now

sinking towards the horizon, the soldier gazed keenly into the distance. At the horizon, there limited by the inequalities of the ground to a distance of about half a league, he saw dark figures moving to and fro, and presently something glistened and shone, like the sunbeams flashing on running water. The experienced eye of the old dragoon at once recognized the reflection of polished steel and the gleaming of arms.

“Ha, ha!” exclaimed he, “there can be no mistake about it now! The confounded Frenchmen are still upon my track, and if they again catch sight of me, they will hunt me down like a wild beast. Well, fortunately we are close to the top, and then we are in the forest directly; and, at worst, I have my sabre and carbine. I would not fear to stand my ground and take my chance, if there were but three or four of the frog-eaters: but no—that must not be now. First of all, to put my good king’s property in a place of security: and so, march, Ali! forward, good horse!”

In the interval Ali had rested, recovered breath, and gathered fresh strength. His courage had never failed: his meal, scanty as it

was, had now revived him, and he put his shoulder stoutly to the collar. Every joint of the cart cracked and creaked—but the wheels rolled forwards, the horse pressed stoutly up the steep track, through mud and over stones, and attained the summit. There, at last, stood steed and driver, within a short distance of the forest, over whose thick foliage, tinted red and brown by the Autumn, the sunbeams threw a golden glow. A garden of roses, though its flowery paths had offered him that repose and refreshment of which he stood grievously in need, would have been a far less welcome sight to the soldier, than the vast wood, in whose dark recesses he hoped to find safety and shelter.

“Another minute’s rest, Ali, and then on again,” said the veteran; “and before the French get to the top of this hill we shall be far enough off, for the fellows take their time, and it is hardly likely they have seen us.”

At that moment, almost before he had ceased speaking, a shot was fired. Turning hastily round, he saw three horsemen galloping after him: their uniforms denoted them to be French dragoons. Pressing their smoking chargers up

the slope, they gained at every stride upon the object of their pursuit, to whom, as they rode, they made signs to stop—signs to which the Prussian vouchsafed not the slightest attention.

“Only three of them,” he muttered; “well, well, I am your man! Forward, Ali!”

From the summit of the hill just surmounted, the road slightly descended, so that there was little draught for the horse. The soldier jumped upon the fore-part of the cart, secured the reins to the frame-work of the awning, so as not to be impeded in his movements, and seized a carbine, which lay upon some straw in the bottom of the vehicle, beside two iron chests of some size. Drawing out the ramrod, he ascertained that the weapon was loaded, opened the pan and looked to the priming, cocked the piece, looped back the linen awning of the cart as far as was necessary to allow him to aim and fire conveniently, and then calmly awaited (a very slight grim smile upon his lips) the arrival of his pursuers. They did not keep him long in suspense: clearing the top of the hill at a gallop, they dashed after the cart, which was proceeding at an easy trot.

"Halt!" shouted the Frenchmen, "scoundrel, halt this instant."

"Oh, to be sure," muttered the old soldier; "anything to do you a pleasure, come along."

A single word, and the grey stood as immovable as though restrained by bit and curb. At the same moment another shot was fired by the French, and the bullet passed so close to the brave Prussian that he plainly heard it whistle. That appeared in no degree to disturb him; not a muscle of his face stirred at the alarming sound, but he looked contemptuously back at the dragoons.

"Ah, you rascals," said he, still talking to himself; "you are at your old tricks, I see; that was always your way, to attack with three to one, and even then to disable your enemy from a distance, if possible; but this time you shall have a taste of what an old Prussian soldier can do."

The three Frenchmen were now at about fifty yards from the cart, approaching at a canter only, for the rapid ascent of the hill had blown their horses. Bringing his carbine to his shoulder with as much coolness as if he

had aimed at a target on a parade ground, he stood for a second or two as motionless as if his tall military figure had been carved out of stone, and then fired. Before the echoes of the report had half died away, he had seized the reins and given the word "forward!" to the grey. Then he looked behind him; one of the dragoons, killed or wounded by the shot, had fallen from his horse; a second had dismounted to aid him, but the third galloped furiously after the cart, brandishing his sabre and shouting imprecations.

"So far so good," quoth the Prussian; "come along, my noisy friend, you and I will have it out with the sabre."

Replacing the carbine amongst the straw, he drew forth a sabre and bared its glittering blade. Then he threw the linen awning completely back, planted himself erect and firmly in the cart, and so awaited the coming of his opponent. On thus obtaining a full view of him, the Frenchman drew and fired a pistol, but without effect.

"Stop," he cried, with a loud voice; "stop, dog, and meet your death."

"We'll see about that, my lad," retorted

the old Prussian, laughing grimly under his white mustache; "only come here, my fine fellow."

Up came the Frenchman, and dealt a furious blow at the old soldier, who parried it with an activity and vigour which might hardly have been expected from one of his age and time-worn frame. Swift as lightning he returned the cut, and with far better effect. The bright blade gleamed in the air like a line of light, and descended upon the hussar's head with such force, that with a deep groan he fell heavily from his saddle.

"You will know for the future, Frenchman," said the Prussian, coolly; "that it is not always advisable to press a flying foe too hard." And laying aside his sabre, he again grasped the reins. "You are not killed this time, I know," added he; "and your comrades must look after your hurt, for I have no time. First and foremost and before all things I must look after the king's property; and so farewell. Forward, Ali, and that quickly."

Not another word was needed to put the good horse on his mettle. He started off at a rapid trot, and his master let him trot on,

whilst he kept a sharp watch on the road in his rear. After a while the old Prussian gave one of his silent laughs, and again turned his gaze a-head.

"Yes, yes," he soliloquized, "I thought as much. Two have got enough, and the third thinks it best to follow no further. From the cavalry I have nothing more to fear; but if the infantry come up and see how it has fared with their mounted comrades, they will hang upon my track as long as they have a leg to stand upon; and in these mountains, where it is all up and down hill, they will at last overtake me. To be sure it will be dark in two or three hours, and one might perhaps,—but no, it is useless to attempt it; Ali is too fatigued, and can never hold out for another hour. They will catch me, to a certainty, and then what will become of my military chest, which I have hitherto so successfully kept from their hands? No, no, I can never get to Magdeburg before they come up with me; I must see and hit upon some other plan."

In evident perplexity the stout old soldier passed his hand across his bald brow, and for a minute or two seemed buried in thought.

Suddenly his countenance brightened, and he joyfully slapped his thigh.

"That will do," he exclaimed, "yes, *that will* do; in that way we shall cheat pursuit. Nothing could be better. Hallo, Ali, trot but another half hour as you are now doing, and we are safe. Yes, yes, the place cannot be far from here,—I knew it well of old,—yonder, behind the corner of the wood, we shall find it. Less than half an hour will take us thither at this pace."

The Prussian was right. Ali trotted briskly along, and in little more than a quarter of an hour they reached an angle of the forest. Once more the soldier looked behind him: not a sign of the French was to be seen. Then, instead of ascending another hill, at whose foot he had arrived, he turned the horse off the road and drove in amongst the trees, selecting his way as much as possible over stones and rock, where the wheels left little or no trace. At last he pulled up behind a tangled thicket, which could not be seen from the road. Jumping out of the cart, he retraced on foot every step he had taken since he turned off from the main track, carefully obliterating all marks of

the passage of the cart, so that it was impossible to discover that he had changed the previous direction of his journey.

"Now I am safe," said he, laughing: "the fellows will think I am still in front of them, and before they find out their mistake, I shall have done all I want to do."

The first French bayonets just glittered in the far distance, as he completed his precautions and hurried back to the spot where he had left his cart. There he sat himself down and listened attentively. No very long time elapsed before he heard a tumult of loud voices, speaking in a foreign tongue; then the clash of weapons and trampling of feet, and shouts and cries in French and Italian.

"Steady!" he whispered to his horse, who pricked his ears at the sounds, "steady, Ali! 'Tis they, running blindly into the snare."

As if he understood his master's injunction and peril, the horse stood motionless during the few minutes that elapsed before the noisy march of the French infantry died away in the distance.

"Now, quick!" said the old Prussian; "one more effort, Ali, and then you shall no longer

be degraded into a cart-horse or a beast of burthen."

Taking the horse from the shafts, he quickly unharnessed him and threw the harness into the cart, out of which he took a saddle and bridle, and put them upon Ali. Then, not without a great effort, he lifted from the cart the two iron boxes already mentioned, and placed them upon the saddle, where he secured them as well as he could with ropes and straps. Then taking in his hand a small pick-axe, such as is used by military sappers and miners, he took the horse by the bridle and led him into the depths of the forest. Ali followed willingly, and the load upon his back did not seem half so irksome to him as the draught of the cart.

After a few minutes' march, during which the old soldier looked vigilantly on all sides, he suddenly uttered a joyful exclamation. On a rising ground in his front, there appeared, above the dense and tufted foliage of the forest, the grey dilapidated turrets of an old ruined castle, overgrown with moss, and draped with clustering ivy.

"At last!" exclaimed he; "yes, yes, yonder is the desolate old owl's nest: the sight of it

carries me back to my boyhood, when I and my comrades used to play amongst its ruins, gathering the sweet-scented wall-flower that grew between the stones, and hurrying away at nightfall in terror of the ghosts that were said to haunt it. Come, Ali, another pull up the hill, and then no more baggage-carrying for you."

Keeping the tower in sight as a landmark, man and horse strode towards it, and in a short time attained the summit of the little hill. The tower was but a small portion of a very extensive ruin, that of an ancient castle, which, centuries before, had doubtless been the fortified residence of a powerful noble and of his numerous retainers; perhaps of one of those robber-knights, who, in the middle ages, made themselves famous by their depredations and freebooting propensities. Not a few of such ruins are still to be seen in the wild forest district of the Harz mountains. This was one of the most considerable in extent. It were hard to say for how many hundred years it had been deserted, but certainly it had never had,—not only within the old soldier's memory, but within that of his father and grandfather,

—other inhabitants than the beasts and birds of the forest, or other visitors than truant schoolboys, or than some traveller who had gone astray in the intricacies of the mountain paths.

“Well,” said the old soldier, as he stood gazing at the ruins, “here or nowhere we are safe from the French—safe from them and from every curious eye. The hawks, and jack-daws, and yonder fox, which I see sneaking away into the forest, will hardly betray us. So now off with the load from your back, my brave Ali, and whilst I bury it you may take a stroll about the ruins, and refresh yourself with the grass, which grows as thick and rich as if it knew that here it has neither scythe nor sickle to fear.

Whilst his tongue thus wagged, the veteran’s hands were not idle. He unbound the two chests from the saddle, placed them upon the ground, took off his horse’s bridle, and gave him his liberty. Ali neighed merrily at the relief thus afforded him, gave a buck-leap into the air, to make sure he was lightened of his load, and fell to cropping, with hearty appetite, the fresh green herbage that grew luxuriantly in the shadow of the ruins.

"Make the most of it, my lad," said his master; "it will be an hour, at least, before I have done my business here, and so long may you take for rest and supper—but now, to work!"

After some examination and walking to and fro amongst the ruins, the soldier at last found a place which seemed to suit his purpose. He paused, looked around him on all sides, paced the ground with equal steps in various directions, as if measuring it, and at last struck his pick-axe into the earth with the decided air of a man who has made up his mind, and is satisfied he is doing for the best.

"Here will I dig," said he; "the place is easy to find again. Here, on my right, in a southerly direction, the tower is exactly thirty paces off; on my left, northwards, also thirty paces distant, is the wall of the old chapel; straight before me, still at thirty paces, is the castle well: there used to be water in it, but the parapet has fallen down, I see, and it is choked with stones and rubbish; and behind me, at thirty paces, as nearly as may be, stands the big old beech-tree, which I don't think anybody is likely to transplant; so I am sure

to find the place again, though it were a thousand years hence, were I to live so long, which is hardly likely. Ha, ha! a good joke, indeed! an old ramrod like myself to think of living a thousand years, or a thousand weeks either! No, no; Heaven forbid! All that I desire and pray for is, to be spared long enough to see the shameful stain of the rout at Jena wiped off from the Prussian arms, and to restore my king's property to him: longer than that I care not to live, and shall be ready whenever it may please God to take me!"

Without further delay, the old man set to work, to clear away, from the spot he had fixed upon, the fragments of stone and mortar with which that part of the ruins was thickly strewn, and then began to dig a hole in the hard dry soil. For a full hour he vigorously plied his pick-axe, kneeling down from time to time to clear away, with his large sinewy hands, the loose earth that accumulated in the hole. The perspiration rained from his brow with the severity of his exertions; he had been all day on foot and fasting; but his strong will supported him, and he suspended not his toil until a hole, upwards of four feet

deep and large enough to contain the two iron boxes, was open before him. Then he fetched the boxes, placed them one after the other in the cavity, filled it up with earth, which he trod down hard with his feet, carried away the superfluous soil in his cloak and threw it down the well, and finally covered over the spot where he had dug, with stones, mortar, and fragments of brick, so that it was impossible to distinguish it from any other part of the ruins, or to suspect that the earth had lately been disturbed there. The keenest treasure-seeker might have passed fifty times over the place, without dreaming of the deposit that lay beneath his feet.

So thought the old soldier, when, retiring to a short distance, he contemplated the scene of his labours, and rubbed his hands self-approvingly.

"Well done !" he said, chuckling to himself; "it must be a cunning grave-digger who could detect that treasure, lying so deep and so quiet, and with the rubbish strewn over as naturally as if it had never been stirred since it first fell from the walls. The frog-eaters may do their worst and wear their eyes out before they find

a copper of it. Old Frank Sabertash has been too many for them this time, cunning though they think themselves. Who would ever suppose now, that here, in these mouldy old ruins, five hundred thousand dollars lie buried, in good silver Prussian dollars, and in gold Fredericks, and in paper, and what not? Here, under lime and rubbish, amongst these dreary walls, where scarcely a human creature ever sets foot, and where foxes and rooks and weasels make themselves at home! So the gold and silver may lie there undisturbed, safe as in the king's treasury. A day will come for it to see the light again. And now, Ali, we must be off!"

Obedient to the call, the horse trotted up to his master, and willingly suffered himself to be bridled. Frank Sabertash (such was the name of our concealer of treasures) put foot in stirrup and was about to spring into the saddle, when a sudden thought struck him. He withdrew his foot and looked thoughtfully before him.

"Yes," he murmured to himself, "that is a thing to consider. I am an old fellow, those Frenchmen are always crossing one's path,

and it is impossible to say what may come to pass. It would be a bad business were any thing to happen to me—if I were to get shot or cut over the head like that hussar just now, —and if I were to die without any human being knowing where the treasure lies, and it were to remain buried and unknown of till the last day of the world. That must not be. Ali and I have not toiled and fought and starved, and spent our very life blood, that the money should lie for ever hidden, but that we might one day restore it to our king and master! Let me see what is to be done!”

Thoughtful and undecided, the old man sat himself down on a heap of stones, and looked at Ali, who shook his head and seemed to wonder why the march was delayed.

“Aye, you shake your head,” said Sabertash, “because you are as much at a loss as I am to know what to do! I am in a worse perplexity now than when the French were hard at my heels. What is to be done? If I write down all the particulars in my pocket-book, and the book gets lost, the treasure will be dug up by the finder. That will not do. On the other hand, if I die, the treasure is lost to every-

body. That will not do either. What can I do? How can I manage?"

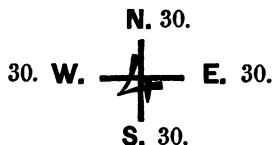
The soldier rubbed his forehead, looked at Ali, then up at the sky, then down upon the ground, but none of these objects suggested a plan to him. Presently, however, his perplexed look disappeared, his brow expanded, his eyes sparkled, and at last he rose joyfully to his feet.

"I have hit it," he exclaimed. "I will carve certain marks upon yonder tower, smear them over with clay after I have copied them in my pocket-book, and then let things take their chance. If I live, all is well; if I die, I must trust in God's goodness that he will cause the pocket-book to fall into honest hands, so that the king may not be defrauded of his money. Yes, yes; that is the best and the only thing to do. And so to work to do it at once."

Taking a strong clasp knife from his pocket, he selected a smooth stone,—one of the topmost ones of a broken part of the wall,—and chipped out upon its surface the figure of a cross. Opposite to each point of this cross he rudely carved the letters N. S. E. W., and the number 30; then he cut a 4 in the centre, where the cross was, and copied the whole in his pocket-

book, where he added the name of the castle. So that in the book the inscription stood thus :

Hohenstein Castle, in the Harz forest :—



These hieroglyphics seemed to him perfectly adapted to his purpose ; and, doubtless, whatever length of time might elapse before he returned to the castle, they would be all that was necessary to refresh his memory and guide him to the burial-place of the treasure. Whether they were sufficiently clear and explicit to guide a stranger to the spot, was altogether another question ; but Frank Sabertash calculated thus :—

“If I live,” he said, “all will be right ; if I die, it will be very hard if my death be so sudden that I have not time to tell my secret to some friend or comrade, and then these signs will suffice to guide him in his search amongst the ruins. And now, Ali, march is the word, for I am hungry, and you won’t be sorry to see the inside of a stable. A bit of supper for

me, and a feed of corn for you, we shall surely find, for my native place, the dear old village of Hohenberg, is but at a short distance, and as for the French, they will have taken themselves off to Benkendorf. The greedy fellows have no love for small villages, when they can meet with big ones, where the fare is fatter, and where they may live at free quarters in good houses."

One last glance the soldier cast at the spot where his treasure lay buried, smeared the stone over with a mixture of clay and lime, which he quickly prepared, and which rendered it impossible to observe that there was an inscription upon it, got upon his horse, and rode slowly out of the ruins to the place where he had left the cart. Taking out his sabre and carbine, he broke up the vehicle by the help of his pickaxe, collected some dry brushwood, heaped the fragments of the cart upon it, and set fire to the whole; displaying in this, as in all his actions throughout the day, the energy, promptitude, and ready resources of an old campaigner. In a very short time, all that remained of the cart was the iron-work and a few charred and smoking sticks, which he kicked away in different directions.

"There," said he, when all was done; "now no one can find out where the cart stopped, and I have not to fear that it will put anyone upon the scent of the money. There's no saying what tales such a cart might tell. That it was a treasure-cart the French knew well enough, or they would not have taken all that trouble to overtake it. And no doubt they will take more trouble still to discover what has become of it. Well, they are welcome to search, I don't think they will get much for their pains. Meanwhile, you and I, Ali, will see after our night's lodging. The sun is set and it is time we got rest and shelter."

Remounting his horse, he returned to the country road which he had quitted only some three hours previously. The grey trotted on as merrily as though he smelt clean straw and a full manger at the end of his journey; and, although the night soon set in very dark, Sabertash pursued his way through the mountains with perfect confidence, and like one well acquainted with the district. In little more than half an hour, he saw lights glimmering at no great distance, and drawing rein, the old soldier bent forward on his saddle and listened attentively.

CHAPTER II.

THE CASTLE OF HOHENBERG.

THE Castle of Hohenberg, in the district of the Harz mountains, on the borders of Prussia and Brunswick, stands upon a small hill, its stately front towering above the smiling valley in which the village of the same name displays its neat cluster of white houses, in the midst of gardens, meadows, and corn-fields. From the windows of the castle a delightful view is obtained of the broad and well cultivated vale, of its background of wooded mountains, and of the lateral valleys, sloping gradually away, in green and blooming vistas, to the upper levels of the range. Delightful is the stillness that in summer prevails in those valleys, through which clear streamlets ripple, refreshing in their passage the rich pastures, where a thousand fragrant plants perfume the air. There, at evening, when grass and flowers are heavy

with dew, and the glow-worms display their soft light upon the banks, the slender roebuck is seen to issue forth from the shadows of the forest in quest of his favourite herbs. At the edge of the meadows, and amongst the bushes that border the streams, where all is so silent and solitary, the little wood-birds best love to nestle, and, early and late, to strain their melodious throats, chanting joyous songs of gratitude to their Creator.

Upon an autumn day—one of those warm, misty autumn days, which seem like the last lingerings of summer—a slender handsome lad, about thirteen or fourteen years of age, stood at a bow window of the castle, and gazed thoughtfully and sadly down the valley. Upon the skirts of the mountains hung masses of white clouds, which, as the gentle breeze swept them away, left traces of their passage in the form of countless rain-drops, glittering like diamonds on the thick foliage, now tinted by autumn's hand in every shade, from pale yellow and vivid red to the darkest russet brown. A redbreast hopped noiselessly through the bushes which grew close to the window, twittered in subdued notes its melancholy song, and gazed

with its kindly, honest eyes at the youth, who at first did not observe it. Then it flew nearer and nearer, shook its wings and sang louder than before, its little head almost touching the glass. Now, at last, the boy noticed its presence.

"Alas, my poor robin," cried he, mournfully, "would you remind me that to-day I have forgotten you? Forgive me, my poor friendly little creature! You have done well to remind me; so long as I remain in the castle, you shall not fail of your food from my hand. To-day, for the last time! To-morrow it will be in vain that you twitter and flap your wings at the window!"

An expression of profound grief convulsed for an instant the melancholy countenance of the handsome boy, and he clenched his teeth hard, to repress the tears that started to his eyes. Stepping quickly back from the window, he opened a box that stood upon a table, and took from it a handful of crumbs which he had collected for the redbreast. These he strewed upon the window ledge; the bird immediately flew in, looking boldly and confidently at its benefactor, who might easily have taken the little creature with his hand,

and then commencing, without the least appearance of timidity, to pick up the breakfast prepared for it. The boy continued to gaze at his feathered pet with the same sad and tearful expression.

"There," he said, giving the bird a few maggots, by way of dessert; "now fly away southwards with your brethren, for you will never see me here again!"

As though it had understood him, the red-breast rose upon the wing, settled on the branch of an adjacent honeysuckle bush, twittered a few notes, and then, taking a wider flight, soared far away over the valley.

"So must we too fly from our home," said the boy to himself; "but not so light of wing nor so joyful of heart as you, my little bird, who all the summer long have been my welcome guest."

Again he relapsed into his thoughtful mood, and stood for some minutes motionless, his burning forehead pressed against the cool panes of the window. Suddenly he turned quickly away, and walked back into the centre of the apartment.

"Grandmother!" cried he, impetuously, addressing a venerable and dignified old lady,

who sat, with pale cheeks and a countenance as melancholy as his own, in an arm-chair beside the marble chimney-piece. "Grandmother, is it then really true? Must we indeed leave this castle—quit my father's house and home? Is there no possibility of avoiding it—no means of escape from the cruel necessity? Must it, must it really be?"


"My child," replied the grandmother, "it must really be, although my heart well nigh breaks at the thought. Yonder trees, under which I once played, a happy child; these rooms, in which your father and yourself were born; in which I watched over your infancy and rejoiced at your growth—from all these we must depart."

"But why, grandmother, why?" cried the boy, in passionate grief. "Who can force us to go? What gives the right to that base, bad-looking man, Anthony Brown, to drive us from our own house? Explain that to me, grandmother, I entreat you!"

"Some other time, my dear Sigismund, my beloved child," replied the old lady, gently and sadly; "you are yet too young; you would hardly understand all the circumstances. And

be not too passionate, my child ; we should learn to bear, with patience and resignation, the sorrows God sends us, and not to murmur against them. Give thanks to a merciful Providence that you are not left helpless and destitute ; that we have still a place of refuge, and that we at least are spared the bitterest of all cares—the care for the food and covering of the body. Though we have to leave the castle, we shall remain in its vicinity: if we can no longer look down from its windows, we may look up at them, and be thankful that we at least are suffered to remain in our native valley. The little property down below, by the river side ; how happy and how grateful I am that it at least remains to us !”

“But the woods, grandmother !” cried the boy, “our glorious woods and covers, full of deer and roebuck ! and our fields and meadows ! and our beautiful garden—oh ! so beautiful in Summer, with its shrubberies of roses, and its tulip beds, and the fountains with the gold fish !—is Anthony Brown to take all those things ? And may I no longer go shooting in the woods and gathering flowers in the garden ? And the great hot-houses and the melon-bed ;



do all these, all, everything, belong no more to us, but to that man?"

"All, my child," replied the grandmother, with a resigned but mournful smile; "nothing remains to us but the little farm down yonder, with its paddocks and the few acres of corn-land. But do not complain, Sigismund; it is enough for both of us, so long as we live, and much more than many thousands of men possess. Opulence and luxury are certainly no longer ours, but—*'the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.'*"

"Oh, grandmother, it cannot, cannot be!" cried Sigismund, in great grief. "The beautiful castle, forest, fields, and garden; all to pass into that man's hands! Why, why is it so? Grandmother, I beseech you, tell me! I am no longer a child; I understand all you tell me, and when I know all, it perhaps will lessen the pain I now feel in my heart. Grandmother, I pray you to explain the matter to me?"

The good old lady gently stroked her grandson's burning cheeks.

"Be it so, then," she said, mildly, but as if


making an effort; "be it so. You are still very young, but yet you perhaps have a right to learn why you, the natural heir to this castle and estate, must turn your back upon your father's house. To me myself many things in this business are still obscure, but my utmost efforts have been insufficient to throw light upon them; and, above all, it is to me perfectly incomprehensible that—but, enough; the law has decided, and against the law it is in vain to contend.

"It is now eighteen or nineteen years ago, my child," resumed the old lady, after a short pause, "that your father desired to purchase the mill situated at the exit from the valley. It was not so much for the mill itself that he cared, as for the meadows and the beautiful strip of woodland which belonged to it, and which he found sadly in his way when he went out shooting, because it was completely surrounded by his own forests. So when the owner of the mill died, and the heirs declared the property to be for sale, your father at once exclaimed that his it should be, though he paid the double of its value. The heirs knew that your father had set his mind upon getting the

land, and Anthony Brown, the attorney, to whom the sale was entrusted, knew it also. By his cunning manœuvres he so managed, that your father had to pay not only double, but almost thrice the real value, for the mill, the meadows, and the strip of forest. This, however, would not have greatly mattered, for your father was rich enough to spare even so large a sum as that amounted to; but it so happened that he had not the money by him at the time. Then came that man, Brown, the attorney, and offered, in the most willing manner, to make your father advances to any amount he might require. It was not from kindness that he made the offer, for he demanded a high rate of interest. Your father disliked the man exceedingly, on account of his mean, cringing, and wily character; nevertheless, as this was a mere matter of business, as he had urgent need of the money, if he did not wish to see the mill pass into other hands, and as he was quite certain of repaying back the loan at the end of a year, for he had a sum larger than that required in the hands of his friend, Count Burgstein, he did not say no, but accepted the money from Brown, gave him

the necessary receipt, and at last found himself in possession of the land he had so long desired. In spite of the high price he had had to pay for it, he was well pleased with his bargain, and I do not remember ever to have seen him so gay and joyful as at that time. The strip of forest was no longer in his way when he went out shooting, and you know yourself how dearly he loved to ramble through the woods with his gun and his faithful dogs. The mill he sold again for a trifle, and soon there was no longer any talk about the matter.

“Only upon one occasion was I reminded of it, and that was a year later, when Mr. Brown one day drove into the court-yard in his gig, and remained for some time in private conference with your father. I conjectured that they had business together; indeed, I made no doubt of what the business was, and that your father was paying back the money which he had borrowed from Brown just a year before, on the occasion of the purchase of the mill. I was the more persuaded of this, that we had received a visit, a few days previously, from Count Burgstein, to which visit I could ascribe



no other object than the repayment to your father of the sum of money the count had had from him on loan. What put the correctness of my conjecture almost beyond a doubt was, that after the count's departure, your father had casually said, that he should now soon be clear with Mr. Anthony Brown.

"When Brown left the castle, your father was in very high spirits, and I naturally attributed this to no other cause than to his having got rid of the heavy debt he had contracted towards the attorney; for I knew that he had felt it very disagreeable to have to accept money from that man's hands, or to have any transaction with him whatever. He certainly did not say, in so many words, that he had paid off his debt to Brown, but his joy at having done so was so plainly legible upon his countenance, that I did not think it worth while speaking to him on the subject. And I was the less desirous to do so, that the very name of Brown the attorney was disagreeable and repugnant to him, and to mention it was enough to spoil his good-humour, so great was his aversion to that man. So I held my tongue, and rejoiced in


my heart that we should no more have occasion to see Mr. Brown at the castle.

“Alas! my silence and reserve were wrong. Had I plainly asked your father the question whether he had paid the attorney or not, I might possibly have caused him an unpleasant moment, but perhaps—perhaps, my dear boy, I should have saved your inheritance!

“My anticipation that we should see no more of Mr. Brown was fully realized. When he drove out of the court-yard, I saw him for the last time for many years, and in another hour I had forgotten his existence. Little did I then think in how cruel a manner I was one day to be reminded of it!

“Alas, my child! who could then have foreseen what has come to pass!


“Years flew by, bringing joys and sorrows in their train, as all years have done since this world began. I had the joy to see your father married, and to hold you in my arms. Mine was the bitter, bitter grief, to follow your excellent mother, your noble-hearted father, upon their last sad journey—the journey to the grave. Then you, my child, became my hope and consolation,—my last remaining one, ex-



cept in the goodness of God. You were my only joy,—the last link that attached me to earth. For me the outward world, its struggles and its pleasures, had ceased to exist; I thought no more of it; I believed myself for ever detached from its affairs, and—too presumptuously—safe from its persecutions. Suddenly there fell upon me, like a thunderbolt, a warning, that, if I had forgotten the world, it had not forgotten me. I received a letter from Mr. Brown—a short, formal letter of a few lines, containing nothing but the mere inquiry whether I would not at last take measures to pay your father's debts? The money due to him, he said, had gradually accumulated to a considerable sum, and after waiting patiently for so many years, he wished to receive what belonged to him.

“This letter fell upon me, as I have said, like a thunderbolt, and the shock was the greater, that no menacing clouds had forewarned me of the storm. My first emotion was consternation at the carelessness of your father, in thus postponing and neglecting the settlement of his affairs with that man. But, after very brief reflection, there arose in my

mind, involuntarily, and with irresistible force, the suspicion, that this was the wicked device of a bad and crafty man to defraud us, and to rob you, my poor child, of your inheritance. Rousing myself from the first terror into which the letter had plunged me, I recalled to mind the circumstances of the affair, and remembering that Count Burgstein had been at the castle a few days before Brown's last visit, and had brought with him a large sum of money, I could not doubt that, out of this sum, the attorney had been duly reimbursed his claim. How was it possible otherwise to account for your father's joyful humour after his interview with Brown, and for Brown's silence, during so many years, on the subject of the debt? If the money had not been paid to this lawyer, how could one account for the total disappearance of so large a sum as that which Count Burgstein had paid over to your father? It could not be otherwise; Brown was attempting a gross fraud, and I doubted not that his roguery would meet with the punishment it so well merited. I answered him to that effect, and positively affirmed that he had received his money on his last visit to the castle.



“Some days passed, and then came a second letter from Brown. It was a pity, he wrote, that I should condescend to deny your father’s just debts. The documents were in his hands, he said, and the courts of law would very soon decide the matter in his favour, if I persisted in refusing payment. On his last visit to the castle he had received no money, he said, but only excuses for non-payment, and fair promises, which your father unfortunately had never fulfilled. The writer of the insolent and unfeeling letter concluded by advising me to come to a speedy decision, for that if I had not done so within a week, he should appeal to the tribunals for redress.

“This communication redoubled my anxiety and alarm. Once more, however, I summoned up courage. I was thoroughly convinced that your father had paid the money, and I made no doubt, therefore, that I should somewhere find the receipt for it. I set actively to work to examine all the old papers in the house. No pains did I spare in the search, but hunted through one drawer after another,—in boxes, chests, and desks. I turned over every page, every fragment of manuscript,—not a nook

did I leave unexplored ; I sought between the drawers, and in every imaginable corner where a slip of paper could possibly find a place. I passed three entire days in this occupation, and the time being so limited, I sat up the greater part of the nights, persisting in the search. Alas ! I found nothing—not the smallest evidence, not even a remote indication that your father had settled the affair, and paid Brown his money. My anxiety daily increased ; my last and only consolation now was, that Brown, who, I was positive, had been paid, could no longer be in possession of the original acknowledgment given him for the loan, and which your father, on returning the money, would not have failed to have demanded and received back. So I waited, with a throbbing heart, for the summons to appear before the court which was to decide on the affair. The covetous attorney did not long leave me in this state of painful suspense. He brought an action, the trial of the cause came on, and, to my utter dismay, he produced in court the acknowledgment given him by your father of the money lent. ‘It is false!—a forgery!’ I exclaimed, unable to restrain my feelings,

and still thoroughly convinced of my right. The document was examined, the signature was carefully compared with others of your father's, and the judges declared their opinion that it was genuine. The court decided that I must either satisfy Mr. Brown's claim, or be prepared to see our estate sold publicly to the highest bidder. It was all to no purpose that I explained to the judges the grounds upon which was based my conviction that Brown had long since been paid his due. They pitied me,—they did not conceal that they heartily sympathized with me; some even shrugged their shoulders, and were of opinion that it was by no means impossible there was some fraud in the matter, but there were no grounds to doubt the genuineness of the receipt with your father's signature, and, with that in view, the law was compelled to decide in favour of Brown, although he was notorious and in evil repute as a miser and usurer. There was nothing for it but to submit to my misfortune, and satisfy the man's demand.

“This demand, my dear Sigismund, was an enormous one. The sum which your father had originally borrowed of Brown, amounted

to many thousand dollars; and in the eighteen or nineteen years that had elapsed since the date of the loan, this large sum, on which no interest had ever been paid, had considerably more than doubled itself. It was quite impossible to raise this money, especially in times like these, when war was daily expected to break out; there was no resource but to sell our estate. The nearer this terrible moment came, the greater became my grief and anxiety. Over and over again did I examine all your father's papers, and especially those which he kept in his large ebony writing desk, but nothing did I find which could throw even the faintest light upon this sad and mysterious business. All that now remained to me was submission to the will of the Most High.

"At last came the fatal day on which our old castle and beautiful estate were to be sold by auction. That which then happened was exactly what I might have expected; buyers were wanting; the few who presented themselves to compete for the property, did not venture, in these unsettled, warlike times, to bid its full value. Brown the attorney became the purchaser, at a price just equivalent to his

claim upon the estate, but not equal to the half of what the property was really worth. Never shall I forget the triumphant smile, or the wild eager look of gratified avidity, with which he heard this fine old property knocked down to him by the auctioneer. From that moment he, Anthony Brown, was the lord of Hohenberg, and we, whose ancestors had owned it for centuries, must thank God that we still possess my widow's jointure, the little house and small patch of land, which ensure us a sufficient although a scanty income. And now, my child, I have told you all; you know why we must quit the castle, and you will, I am sure, submit, with manly resignation and calmness, to that which is unhappily inevitable, and which Providence has ordained."

The good old lady paused, and at first the boy said nothing, but buried his burning face in his grandmother's lap, to hide the bitter tears he was unable to restrain. He sobbed gently, and the grief he felt at being thus driven from his father's house, was so deep and violent that his whole frame trembled. But Sigismund was a resolute and sensible lad, and soon he got the better of his emo-

tion, and repressed, by a strong effort, the outburst of feeling. Once more he raised his head, wiped the tears from his face, and met his grandmother's compassionate look with a clear and steadfast gaze.

"You are right, grandmother," he said, "and we must not murmur against God's decrees. So no more tears and lamentations; but let us hope, dear mother, that God will bring the fraud to light, if indeed a fraud has really been committed—and committed it must have been. Grandmother, there can be no doubt of it!—we are cheated and defrauded!"

"Yes, yes, my child, that certainly is also my belief," replied the venerable lady; "but there are no means of detecting and exposing the cheat. Believe me when I say that everything—everything has been done that it is in human power to do, to avert from us this great calamity."

"But are you quite sure that you closely examined all the papers, dear grandmother?" asked Sigismund. "Are you sure, too, that you found all that exist in the castle?"

"All, all, my child! Of that you need entertain no doubt."

"Did you particularly look through everything in the ebony desk?" insisted Sigismund, anxiously. "Young as I was at the time, I well remember that my father set great store by that old desk, and that he kept in it all his most important papers and documents. Often, when I was playing in his room, have I seen him open and shut a great many boxes, all of which were stuffed full of papers. Have you looked very carefully through all those, grandmother? I cannot help thinking and believing that the receipt must—must be in the black desk."

Once more the old lady gently shook her head, and fondly patted her darling's glowing cheeks.

"Give up all hope, my child," said she. "It is very painful to me to give you such advice, for I myself would gladly cherish hopes—but it were folly to do so! Accustom yourself to the thought that your father's house is for ever lost to you, and so resign yourself to that which is unavoidable. The black desk does not contain a finger's breadth of paper that I have not handled, turned over, read and examined on all sides—not once or twice, but

fifty or a hundred times. It is useless to deceive oneself, and to harbour hopes that can never be realized."

Sigismund cast his eyes thoughtfully upon the ground. His mind was evidently not satisfied with respect to the black desk.

"Of course, dear grandmother," he said, after a short pause; "you will take the desk with you to our new house?"

"No, my child, I shall not do so," replied the old lady; "it is a heavy, cumbersome, antique piece of furniture, for which we should have no use in our cottage, where indeed we could hardly find room for it. It will remain here. The new owner of the estate has asked me to sell him the entire furniture and fixtures of the castle, and in your interest I have thought it best to agree to do so. Since he must have house and land, he may as well have the rest, and the old black desk amongst other things."

"Yes, grandmother, the furniture let him have," said Sigismund; "only that fine old desk, with its beautiful carvings, which my father valued, and at which he has passed so many and many an hour—that he must *not*.

have, grandmother! Not the desk, I entreat you! To please me, do let us take it down with us to the village, dearest grandmother! I cannot part from the desk, for I should always be thinking that the man Brown was sitting and writing at the very place where my father formerly sat and wrote. It seems like a sort of profanation! We shall surely be able to find a corner for it in our new abode. Let it stand in my room, and I will work at it more industriously than ever I should do at any other desk!"

"Well, well, my child, be it so," said the indulgent grandmother, smiling. "I see I must give way, since you are so bent upon the matter. Tell Frederick to get the desk out, and send it away at once."

Sigismund ran out of the room, found the servant, informed him of his grandmother's wishes, and then returned to her side.

"It is a weight off my heart," he said. "I should sadly have missed my father's beautiful old black desk."

"You are a wilful child," said the grandmother; "I would not mind wagering that you still entertain a secret hope that you may

discover something in that desk having reference to Anthony Brown's business. Confess now, Sigismund, that I have read your thoughts!"

"You have done so, grandmother," answered the lad, with an open, honest glance. "Yes, so it is. And why should I not avow it? If I deceive myself, at any rate I injure no one else by the error; and for the very life of me I cannot get rid of the notion that yonder attorney has defrauded us. If not, what has become of Count Burgstein's money? My father was no spendthrift, every one knows that! Nor can the money have melted away; and had it been stolen, you would certainly have heard of it."

"But, Sigismund, I have looked through that desk time after time, and I repeat that it cannot possibly contain anything that has escaped my notice."

"And yet," said Sigismund, "does not one sometimes hear tell of hidden drawers and the like places of concealment, scarcely possible to be detected by those unaware of the secret?"

"Alas, yes, dear boy," replied the grand-

mother, with a melancholy smile; "in your story-books you may have met with such things, but in real life they do not very often occur. The ebony desk, though it looks black and mysterious enough, contains no secrets. Foolish as it is, the same thought occurred to me—even as a drowning man clings to the smallest straw. I sent for a carpenter, and had the desk taken to pieces—no secret drawer was to be found. So even this last faint hope, my poor Sigismund, you must be content to abandon."


The lad's intelligent features assumed an expression of surprise and dejection, for his grandmother was right in thinking that he secretly hoped to discover some hidden drawer in the desk, and, in the drawer, the all-important document. His naturally courageous and manly character, however, enabled him soon to conquer the first feeling of depression occasioned him by this final disappointment.

"Well," he said, "though there is positively nothing to be hoped from the desk, it will always be dear to me as a memorial of my father. In due time, and in its own way, Pro-

vidence will doubtless bring the deceit to light; for I would stake my life on the fact of some deceit having here been practised."

"Yes," replied the grandmother, thoughtfully, "I myself find it impossible to get rid of that conviction. But however it may be," she added with a sigh, "nothing now remains to us but patience, resignation, and hope. Come, Sigismund, I think I hear the carriage drive up which is to take us down to the village. Once more let us pass through the rooms which so long have sheltered us, and then we will make way for the intruder. I would gladly avoid a meeting with the man who has caused me so much anxiety and grief. Come, Sigismund, let me lean upon your arm."

The youth sprang to his grandmother's side, helped her to rise, and gave her his arm. At that moment there was a noise in the corridor without, as of persons in contention; a sharp scolding voice was heard, and at the same time hurried steps approached the door, which was hastily pushed open. An undersized, misshapen, ugly man, with bristling grey hair, which grew low down upon his forehead, almost to the rugged eyebrows that overshadowed



his small sinister eyes, entered the apartment, apparently in a very bad humour.

"What means this, madam?" demanded he, in harsh and discourteous tones. "Why do you allow the furniture to be taken away? We have agreed that I should purchase it."

"Certainly," replied the lady, gravely, and with calm dignity, "but as yet no price has been agreed upon, and I am therefore at liberty to take away with me from the castle such objects as I desire to retain."

"Oh, by all means; anything you like, but not that black desk," said the intruder, harshly. "That desk I particularly wish to have, and without it I do not care to take the rest of the furniture—wouldn't give a copper for all the rest—must have all or none: the desk must remain here."

"Sir," said the old lady, haughtily, "you totally forget that you are talking to me, and that it is *my* property which is in question. I beg to hear no more upon the subject. I keep the desk, and will take immediate measures for the removal from the castle, without the least delay, of all the rest of the furniture."

"So you would have me live in empty rooms


and between bare walls?" said the stranger, rudely. That would hardly suit me, and I shall not put up with it. You said you would sell me the furniture and fittings of the castle, and I keep you to your bargain!"

"My child," said the lady, turning to Sigismund, without deigning to answer the insolent stranger, "we might have spared ourselves this scene, if, instead of talking, we had set out at once for our new dwelling. Let us no longer delay our departure."

"Grandmother," replied the boy, whose bold and expressive countenance was overspread with an angry flush, "you have not yet told me who this man is. Am I right in supposing him to be lawyer Brown?"

"To be sure you are, my lad," said the stranger, spitefully; "the same lawyer Brown to whom this fine castle, with all its beautiful fields and forests, gardens and meadows, now belongs."

"Well, sir," replied the youth, proudly, "if all those things do indeed belong to you, you at least ought to know how to behave to a lady, who is now a stranger in the house which belonged to her until to-day. Come, dear



grandmother, this is no longer a place for us."

"Madam!" cried the lawyer, furiously, "I expect you to have that audacious boy chastised. What! the saucy fellow dares reprove me in my own house? I am master in my own house, and know how to use my right and punish insolence!"

"Not another word, sirrah!" said Sigismund, with suppressed anger; "respect misfortune, if you respect nothing else. God alone knows whether it is rightfully or unjustly that you stand upon this ground and call this castle yours: but even if you *are* in your right, it is cowardly and indecent thus to insult those whom you have driven from their house and home. But if a crime weighs upon your conscience, remember and reflect that there is a Higher Power, which sees that which is hidden, and sooner or later reveals all misdeeds. Are you quite sure that a day may not yet come when I shall stand here as lord and master, whilst you are driven hence, branded with infamy and scorned by all? May God decide between us; in Him do I trust. And now to depart. Not an instant longer will I linger

between walls that are profaned by the presence of such as you !”

Whilst Sigismund thus addressed him, with an earnestness and dignity beyond his years, Anthony Brown’s unpleasant countenance became alternately pale as death and red as fire, and then pale again. He would have spoken, but the words stuck in his throat, and seemed to strangle him. His features were frightfully distorted, and he gasped for breath. By the time that he had recovered his self-possession, Sigismund and his grandmother had disappeared, and with them the black desk, which he would so gladly have retained.

“ Fool that I was !” he muttered to himself ; “ had I but kept the desk—and yonder insolent boy, he has suspicions—but what then ! I am safe and secure ! yes, safe ! safe ! safe !”

And thus muttering broken sentences, the attorney rubbed his hands and laughed to himself—a sharp, unpleasant laugh it was—and then he walked to the window and cast a look of gratified covetousness on his new possessions and on the beautiful landscape that offered itself to his view.

“All mine!” cried he, his ferret eyes gleaming as he spoke; “all mine! I am master here. And who shall dare to tell me that my right is not a good one?”

CHAPTER III.

THE DEAD ALIVE.

WE left the old sergeant of hussars, Frank Sabertash, halted upon a rising ground, to the foot of which extended the last houses of the village of Hohenberg, and lending an attentive ear to the few sounds that broke the stillness of the night. In the village below him, and in the more distant castle, in whose windows lights were visible, all was perfectly quiet. A dog barked in the distance, and the dry leaves that had fallen from the fruit-trees of an adjacent orchard, rustled as the night-wind swept them over the ground.

"All's well, Ali," said the old sergeant, in an under tone, speaking to his horse according to his custom, and patting at the same time the animal's neck; "all's well. Things have turned out just as I expected. The Frenchmen have kept away to the right, following the

forest road, have crossed Hohenberg, and gone on to Benkendorf. We may be very sure, Ali, that if they were here they would be making such a confounded clatter that one would hear them a league off. Well, we must move on, Ali. There is the castle, straight before us ; we have but to follow our noses to get there, and very sure am I that the excellent lady will have a night's lodging for old Sabertash, and a manger full of oats and fresh straw, in a warm stable, for you, Ali. No, no, she will not have forgotten old Frank, who for so many years served her late son as faithfully as he now serves his king. What will little Sigismund have grown into, during the ten or eleven years that have passed since I saw him? Well, we shall soon see. A sweet pretty little chap he was at that time, and many and many were the pleasant hours I passed dancing him on my knee, whilst he pulled the hairs from my mustaches by way of thanks. What is he like, now, I wonder. But I shall soon know that. Go along, Ali—march !”

The grey trotted down the slope, through the village, and ascended more slowly to the castle. At the entrance to the court-yard he

came to a halt, and the sergeant, on trying the gates, found them locked and bolted. He started in surprise.

"Very odd!" muttered he to himself. "I never knew such a thing to happen in my late master's life-time. But, to be sure, the good lady will have heard of the approach of the French, and of the battle which we—God help us!—so miserably lost, and no doubt she is afraid of being surprised by the enemy. Yes, yes, that must be the reason,—and she is right enough. But I expect the bolts and bars will soon be removed for me. We must knock, Ali."

He dismounted, and knocked loudly. After a short period of impatient expectation, slow steps were heard in the court, and a voice, from the inner side of the door, demanded who it was that applied for admission at so late an hour of the night.

"Good friends, comrade!" replied the sergeant. "Open the door and let me in. I will answer for it you shall get no blame, and that you will find there is a hearty welcome here for an old friend and servant."

These hearty words, and the frank, honest

tones of the old soldier's voice, removed the mistrust or apprehensions of the man in the court-yard, and the gates creaked slowly back upon their hinges. Sabertash led in his horse, threw the bridle to the servant, bade him put the animal in the stable, and presently unsaddle, and inquired where he should find his master.

"Above stairs!" replied the man, shortly—"up one staircase, and then the second door on the right in the corridor."

"Oh! in the old blue room, eh?" replied Sabertash. "All right!—I know my way well. Take good care of the horse, my lad. When I have said a few words upstairs, I will come down and give him his corn and straw myself. Let him have nothing to drink yet, do you hear?"

The servant, a surly knave, muttered an affirmative, and the old soldier, after glancing sharply at him, and once more patting his horse caressingly on the shoulder, turned away and entered the castle. Familiar with every nook and passage of the building, he had no difficulty in finding his way, although, to his surprise, hall, stairs, and corridors, were in

complete darkness. Not a lamp or candle was anywhere to be seen, and Sabertash, true to his habit of soliloquising, expressed, in an undertone, as he groped his way in the obscurity, his astonishment at the unwontedly gloomy aspect of the place. He reached the corridor, at once found the door that had been pointed out to him, and knocked.

“Come in !” said a harsh, unpleasant voice.

Sabertash obeyed the commands, and found himself in the blue room. His memory had not deceived him. But great, indeed, was his surprise, when, instead of the Baroness Hohenberg and the young Baron Sigismund, whom he had expected to find there, he beheld, by the dim light of a single candle which flickered and guttered upon the table, a little, mis-shapen man, with grey hair, deep-set, spiteful eyes, and a countenance in whose keen features obduracy, mistrust, and falsehood, were unmistakeably to be read. This person was wrapped in a torn and dirty dressing-gown, and seated in an arm-chair at the chimney corner. He looked round as the sergeant entered.

“Who are you ?—what do you want here ?”

asked the man, who, as the reader will have guessed, was no other than Mr. Anthony Brown, attorney, and the new owner of the castle. "Well, why don't you answer? What's your pleasure here at this time of night, eh?"

The hussar was so staggered at what he beheld, that he did not at once reply to Brown's first questions. But he was too old a soldier to be long surprised at anything, and he soon found his tongue, and answered as abruptly as he was questioned.

"What do I want here? Why, what or whom should I want but the worshipful lady baroness? I understood I should find her here."

The lawyer laughed a laugh as discordant as the sharpening of a saw.

"You understood wrong," he replied. "The master of the house is here, but it has no longer any mistress. I am the owner of this castle, friend, and have this day taken possession of it. The baroness and her saucy grandson live down in the village."

Sabertash started as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, and advanced a step nearer to the lawyer, "what

then has come to pass? Has the baroness sold the fine estate, castle and all?"

"Aye, that has she, and for good reasons too. People sell things for various reasons, my man, and she sold because she must; because she was compelled to pay the old debts of her extravagant son, who was a prodigal and a spend-thrift. But what is all that to you?" snarled the attorney; "what business is it of yours, and what do you want here?"

"Hallo! fellow!" fiercely replied the hussar, "and who may you be, I wish to know, who dares thus to slander my dear and respected master, now no more? Turn your face to the light, that I may see who you are."

And as the command was not immediately complied with, Sabertash strode forward, snatched the candle from the table, and thrust it into the lawyer's face, until it nearly singed his bushy eyebrows. The features displayed by its light so surprised the sergeant, that he almost dropped the candlestick.

"Confusion!" he exclaimed, "the attorney! Brown! Scoundrel, and is it *you* who have driven the lady baroness and my young master from their own fire-side? That has not been

fairly done, my man, I am very sure. Come, speak out! How came it to pass? Quick, sirrah! You well know that I have little patience with fellows of your sort."

At this sudden vehemence and passion, which the old soldier could not and perhaps would not restrain, Anthony Brown shrunk back and became as pale as a newly whitened wall. His whole body trembled like an aspen leaf, his features were contracted with terror, and many seconds elapsed before he had so far collected himself as to be able to reply. At last he succeeded in twisting his unpleasant physiognomy into a painful grin, intended as an indication of courteous and amicable welcome. He bustled out of his arm-chair, and made a violent attempt to seize the hand of the old sergeant, who obstinately refused to give it.

"Let be, Mr. Brown!" said he, sternly. "I know you well, and you know that I do. You know that I hold you for nothing better than a scoundrel and swindler, and a defrauder of widows and orphans! I have not yet forgotten your old tricks; how you circumvented my late master, and cheated and manœuvred about that mill and piece of land, until he was

brought to give three times its value, of which you, you knave, put a good half in your own miserly pocket. An honest man does not give his hand to fellows of your sort, d'ye hear? And now, once more, speak and explain yourself! I want to know, and I *will* know, how your unworthy self got promoted to be master of this castle? The thing is not clear at all, and I would not mind pledging my word, that this is another of your shameful tricks, dishonest schemer that you are!"

"But, good gracious heavens!" cried the lawyer, with loathsome hypocrisy, "how can you, my dear and excellent friend, think thus badly of me—of me, poor honest old Brown, whose greatest happiness it has ever been to serve and oblige everybody, and you in particular, my dear Mr. Sabertash! You well know I was always ready to go through fire and water to do you a pleasure—that I always had the greatest regard for you—you cannot have forgotten it!"

"Hold your tongue, man!" said the soldier, severely. "What's the use of wasting breath? You don't expect to impose upon me, do you, when I knew you so well in old times, and have seen into your cards so often? I say

again that there is some great roguery in all this, and you are the rogue who has done it. If not, why were you so terrified when you suddenly recognized me?"

"Terrified? I?" cried the lawyer and lord of the castle, with a lamentable attempt at an amiable smile; "I never dreamed of such a thing, my dear and honoured friend! Terrified indeed! If I appeared so, it was because I believed you to be long since dead and buried, and thought it was your ghost I saw! But if my surprise was great, my joy is far greater, to see you again amongst us—still the same fine stalwart figure as of old! A splendid looking soldier you always were, Sergeant Sabertash, and you don't look a pin the worse for the years that have passed since we met. Come, sit down, we will have a quiet chat over old times, and drink a bottle of wine together!"

"May every drop of wine turn to poison that I accept from a knave like you!" the stern old hussar replied, with unrepressed disgust. "No more of your grins and grimaces, but speak out like a man, and give true answers to plain questions. How has it come to pass that a sneaking fellow like you has got to be

owner of this castle? Have a care now! No lies or equivocation! For when I leave you, I shall go straight to the lady baroness, and shall soon know from her how matters really stand. And if I find that you have told me a single untrue word—the worse for you, that's all! You know me: old Sabertash does not understand jesting on grave subjects; so beware!"

"Why, how should it have come to pass?" said Brown, viciously darting a stolen glance of bitter hatred at the poor, simple-hearted man, whose well known probity placed him so infinitely above himself, that he felt cowed, and dared not give him look for look, but trembled and writhed beneath the gaze of his keen, steady blue eye. "How should it have come to pass? The late baron left, as appeared after his death, very heavy debts behind him, and the property had to be sold to satisfy the creditors. I bought both land and castle, and paid ready money for them. What is there wrong in that?"

"Silence!" cried old Sabertash, "I am not to be duped by you! Who were the creditors who at such a time, in time of war, when a property like this would scarcely fetch a quar-

ter of its value, at such a time, I say, forced a sale, and shamefully despoiled the baroness and her grandson of their estate? Answer me, sirrah !”

The lawyer writhed and fidgetted about in an agony of perplexity and apprehension.

“What do I know about it?” he at last exclaimed ; “for my part, I am innocent !”

“You may thank your stars if that be true,” retorted Sabertash, roughly. “If it is false—if you are guilty, and that it is by your contrivances that these things have come to pass, then”—and the old man’s eyes flashed angrily as he spoke—“then, my word for it, you shall not long enjoy your ill-gotten estate. But on this point I am disposed to believe you, because I know that my late master never borrowed money from you, except the sum to pay for the mill, which sum was paid back to you in my presence exactly a year afterwards. So that whatever other rogueries you have on your conscience—and they are neither few nor trifling—you can hardly be the creditor who has taken this shameful advantage. But who is it? Tell me his name.”


“Mercy upon us, sergeant, how can I do

that? There are so many of them." replied Brown, with great effrontery; "the lady baroness will tell you all the particulars, my dear Mr. Sabertash."

"Aye, that is true, and I would rather hear them from her lips than from yours. At least, I shall be sure that the tale is true."

Thus spoke the honest sergeant, and without word of farewell turned his back upon the new proprietor of the estate. But Anthony Brown, doubtless for good reasons of his own, was loath to see him depart. He ran after him, grasped his cloak to detain him, and spoke all manner of kind and flattering words to him, entreating him not to quit his house at that hour, but to remain at least one night under his roof, and not to despise a good supper and a soft bed.

"It is so late," he said, "and the worshipful baroness must be very much tired with removing, and if you went there now, you would startle her as much as you did me. People are not accustomed to see old friends start up before them, after a dozen years' absence, especially when they have long thought them dead, as we all did you, for news of your death were received here from Berlin."



"Indeed? Well, that matters very little," replied the sergeant. "The baroness will not be scared, but will rejoice that I am still alive, for she was always kind and gracious to me. Out of the way, man, and let go my cloak! Not an hour—not another minute will I abide under your roof! I would rather sleep on the grass, with the clouds for a covering, than in the house of such a fellow as you. Out of my way, I say!"

With strange persistence the lawyer still strove to detain Sabertash, who, at last, losing all patience, seized him by the collar, and threw him so roughly from him, that his ugly little deformed person flew across the apartment, and was only stopped by the opposite wall. Then the old sergeant opened the door, slammed it as he went out, and Anthony Brown heard his firm, quick step, descending the stairs, and then the jingle of his spurs as he strode across the court to the stables. The next minute he heard the creaking gates open, and the clatter of a horse's hoofs over the pavement. Sergeant Sabertash had left the castle.

"Make fast the door!" croaked the lawyer from the window to his sulky servant. "Do


you hear, Peter?—double locked and bolted!—and let not a living creature come in to-night, without my express orders!”

“Yes, yes, sir!” grumbled a voice below, and the lawyer shut the window so sharply that it rattled again.

In manifest distress, agitation, and alarm, his hands behind his back, his ugly head sunk low upon his breast, his forehead wrinkled, his eyebrows contracted and lowering over his red and sunken eyes, Master Anthony Brown paced up and down his apartment.

“The dead arise!” he muttered to himself. “Who would ever have expected to see yonder old soldier, whom all believed to be in his grave, and who chooses just to-day to come to life again! He must be got rid of—he must be sent away, or all is lost! But how, how am I to manage it?—that is the question.”

And he paced the room more rapidly than before, his body bent forward, like one crouching under an anticipated disaster, and occasionally striking his hands together with a gesture of despair; whilst drops of perspiration stood upon his brow. At last a sudden thought seemed to give him hopes: his eyes gleamed



with a dusky fire, he raised his head, and drew up his uncomely form to the utmost of its diminutive height.

"That will do," he exclaimed; "that will do. Fool that I was not to have thought of it before. Hallo, Peter! Peter!"

The loud shrill summons was soon followed by the entrance of the servant.

"Quick, Peter, quick!" cried his master, whose thin blue lips were extended by a grin of exultation; "quick—get on horseback, and ride your very hardest to Benkendorf."

"To Benkendorf, Mr. Brown? but the French are there—you know that very well. I thought it was for fear of them you bade me make the door fast," added Peter.

"Yes, yes, I know, and that is exactly why I send you;" replied the attorney, hurriedly and impatiently. "Give this note;"—whilst speaking, he had hastily written a few lines, which he now folded and sealed—"give this note to the officer in command of the French troops at Benkendorf, whoever he may be. Ask to be taken straight to him, Peter; do you hear? Fear nothing; no harm will be done to you. Make all haste now, and follow my in-

structions exactly: you know that I do not forget to reward good service. It is half a league to Benkendorf; you can get there in ten minutes, if you make the horse step out—five minutes to see the commanding officer, make fifteen minutes; ten minutes to return, make five-and-twenty. Peter, if you execute my commission correctly, and are back within the half-hour, these two bright gold pieces are yours. And now, away! Take the brown horse, he is the fastest in the stable—spare him not; no matter if you ride him to death. But off with you! Speed, speed, speed!”

Peter, as avaricious as his master, needed no spurring beyond the promise of the two gold pieces. He ran down to the stable, bridled the brown horse, stayed not to saddle him, but threw a blanket on his back, jumped upon him, and dashed at full speed through the gate, which his master opened for him with his own hands. Spiteful and scornful was the chuckling laugh in which Anthony Brown indulged whilst again carefully securing the door and re-ascending the stairs to his room.

“Now I have you!” said he, malignantly; “whatever you may have time to say to the

old woman and her cub of a grandson, I will take good care you shall have no opportunity of deposing to it before a court of law. Away with him. Until he is out of the country and in safe custody, I shall not feel myself secure here in my castle. That impudent boy, Sigismund, said something this morning about his turn coming ;—that I might yet live to be disgraced and he to be triumphant. Well, well, we will take care, at any rate, that the day of revenge shall not come too soon. Ha, ha, ha !”

Again he laughed his grating and malicious laugh, as he re-entered his room and threw himself into his arm-chair, there impatiently to await the return of Peter, who meanwhile was galloping, at the top of his horse’s speed, to the neighbouring village of Benkendorf, charged with a base and treacherous message to his country’s bitterest foes.

CHAPTER IV.

A NIGHT OF ADVENTURES.


SERGEANT Francis Sabertash, after having testified, as has been seen, in no very measured terms, his utter disgust at the change in the ownership of the Hohenberg estate, and his particular contempt of Lawyer Brown, trotted back into the village to seek the house in which the expelled family had taken refuge. Well acquainted with every inch of ground in and about the village, he had no more difficulty in finding, without a guide, the baroness's white cottage, than he had had in discovering the blue chamber in which he had met with so painful a surprise. Nor was he much troubled to dispose of the ten minutes he passed upon the road. Every moment of the time was taken up by an angry soliloquy, in which, according to his custom, he gave expression to the emotions with which he was then more especially filled.

"There can be no question about it," he said; "the hump-backed lawyer is a rogue, and has deceived and swindled the worshipful baroness and little Sigismund. But we will soon discover his tricks, soon expose his scandalous manœuvres; I have arrived here just at the right time to sift this swindle, and to lend a helping hand to the poor mother and orphan; will now hear what the lady baroness has got to say; then I shall not be long finding the thread of the contrivance; and Heaven help the knave if I catch him in fault. I know the fellow well of old. How often have I warned the colonel my late master, to beware of him. And now to find him here, playing the great man in the spacious halls of Hohenstein, like a cuckoo in a linnet's nest! Go along, Ali, we must to the noble baroness, and hear how matters stand. What I am most curious to know is, who was the creditor who pressed his claims and insisted on payment, so as to compel a sale of the estate at such an unfavourable moment. He must be a bad man, whoever he is; as bad as that Brown, and no doubt it was a conspiracy between them. If I did

not know to a certainty that my late respected colonel had no transaction whatever with the lawyer after the affair of the mill, I should think—but that cannot possibly be, for with my own ears I heard him make a vow never again to have dealings with Brōwn. But there is the house; still lights in the windows; good! Carefully over the bridge, Ali, carefully—here we are. And now let us knock. It is rather late, certainly, but they are still up, and every minute is worth a million: who knows whether the French may not be here to-morrow? If they recognize me, they won't stand upon much ceremony. 'Seize the Prussian dog,' will be the word; 'off with him to France!' I know that story of old. No, no; prudence before everything. Halt! Ali."

The docile and well-broken grey stood stock-still at the house-door, and the sergeant dismounted. The door was fastened, and he knocked. A window opened; a boy put out his head, and asked who was there.

"That is Sigismund, and nobody else!" cried the hussar. "Open the door, my boy! I am rather a late visitor, but it cannot be helped; I must speak with the lady baroness, your



grandmother, and that at once. She is still up, I hope?"

"Yes, yes; but who may you be, my good sir?" asked Sigismund.

"Who am I?" repeated the sergeant, in great surprise. "But Lord bless me!" added he, "how is the boy to remember me, when he has not seen me since he left off pap? I am old Frank—old Frank Sabertash, sergeant of the Fifth Royal Prussian Hussars, of which your late gallant father was colonel. Old Frank, who has danced you hundreds of times upon his knee, when you were a little chap, hardly three cheeses high. Ask your grandmother; she will tell you who I am; she won't have forgotten me, I'm sure."

The boy disappeared from the window. The next minute quick steps were heard descending the stairs, and the door flew open, a gush of light issuing from the cheerful passage, and illuminating the martial figure of the old soldier, as he stood at ease beside his faithful charger, his long steel-hilted sabre under his left arm, his right resting on the saddle.

"Aha, there you are," cried Sabertash, cordially, "and a smart, well-built lad you have

grown into. God bless you, my boy ; you are the very image of your father ! ”

“ Welcome, Frank, welcome ! ” cried Sigismund, extending his hand to the soldier, who grasped it heartily. “ Quick, come up stairs. My grandmother was so overjoyed when she heard who it was that knocked. Come, be quick ! ”

“ Patience, my child, ” replied the old sergeant, gazing affectionately upon the lad’s handsome countenance and graceful figure ; “ a good soldier’s first care is always for his horse, and so, if you have got a corner for my brave Ali, be so kind as to shew it me. ”

“ Corners enough, and fodder enough, ” said Sigismund. “ This way, Frank ; here is the stable, there the corn-bin, and here the manger. ”

“ All right, young gentleman ; ” quoth the sergeant ; “ and now go up to your grandmother, present to her my humblest respects, and say that I will soon make my appearance. ”

“ Yes, yes, ” replied Sigismund, “ but my grandmother knows all that, so I will wait here and help you. ”

“ So be it, and thank you, ” said the hussar, who was hugely rejoiced at the friendly recep-

tion he met with, and at the boy's attentions. "Do you recollect me, my dear fellow? It is now so many long years ago that last I saw your handsome face."


"Long ago it certainly is," answered Sigismund, "but I still remember right well how you used to play with me and amuse me, and let me ride on my father's black horse; and I remember your having to go to Berlin to join your regiment, when my father left the service, and how I cried all day when you went away. One does not forget those things, however young one may have been when they happened. And then my father and my grandmother—how often have I heard them speak of you: and how grieved my grandmother was when news came from Berlin that you were dead. She would not have believed it was you now, had she not recognized your voice."

"Well, I am still alive, thank God, and hope I may live to do you some service, my young sir," replied the sergeant. "Could I only have dreamed that I passed for dead in these parts, it would have been my duty to write a line; but I knew nothing of the report, and heard just now, for the first time, from that Brown,

that, according to Hohenberg belief, I was long since dead and buried. Notwithstanding which, I still live, and hope to live many a year yet, to have the joy of helping to drive those intruding Frenchmen out of the country. But that is not the question—just now we have other fish to fry. There, Ali, there is a double feed for you, and may you enjoy it, my trusty comrade, for you have this day done good service to king and country. And now, Sigismund, let us go to your grandmother.”

“With quick and elastic step, Sigismund led the way, and in a few moments the old sergeant stood before the noble lady, who received him with many friendly words, and kindly held out her hand to him. Sabertash took it, kissed it respectfully, and was so deeply moved, that a tear gathered on his grey eye-lashes, and ran down upon his snow-white mustache.

“Your ladyship,” he said, with a faltering voice, and passing his hand over his eyes, “must be so gracious as to forgive a poor fool of a soldier, who little thought that in his old age he should weep twice in one day—for Prussia’s disgrace, and for your misfortunes.




To find you thus—to find you here, whom I left in the castle, and to think who the knave and impostor is who dwells there in your place—to think of that almost breaks my heart !”

“Compose yourself, my good Frank,—compose yourself,” gently replied the excellent old lady. “Well do I know you have ever been a devoted servant of our house, and often and often have we thought and spoken of you with affection when you were compelled to leave us to fulfil a higher duty—your duty to your country. Be assured we never forgot you, my good Frank ! But tell me, what brings you here ? Is your regiment quartered in the neighbourhood ?”

“Alas, madam !” replied the sergeant, dejectedly ; “is it possible you have not yet heard of the grievous misfortunes that have fallen upon our country ? A battle lost at Jena, another at Auerstadt, all put to flight, the entire fine Prussian army routed and disbanded, and the French everywhere victorious ! My regiment—alas ! where is it ? Cut up, scattered, dispersed ! I myself was obliged to fly like the rest, saving upon my road a military chest

which had been lost, and which was guarded by a few Frenchmen. They were waiting for horses to drag it away; for the horses belonging to the cart had been shot dead, and the men belonging to it had either been killed or had run away. There were only four of the French; they were overjoyed at their rich booty, and never dreamed of being attacked by a routed enemy. Seeing them off their guard, I thought I could manage to rescue the king's money, and I fell upon them unawares. Their shots missed, mine hit. One I sabred, two I had already knocked over with my pistols, and the fourth ran away. The only difficulty then was how to get the cart away. There was nothing for it but to make my charger drag it, although he is not much used to such work. Luckily the harness was there. So—saddle and bridle off, collar on—my poor Ali into the shafts, and away with us at top of his speed. Fortunately I knew roads and country well, and although the French obstinately pursued me, and were sometimes quite close upon my heels, they never quite caught me, and Ali held out bravely till we reached the Harz mountains. There I had another small



skirmish, got the upper hand, but found it was absolutely necessary to put my treasure in a place of safety, if I did not mean it again to fall into the hands of the French. I made all haste to bury it in a secure corner, burned the cart, and now here I am, come to beg a night's lodging. Alas! I had little notion that you had been driven from the castle by that fellow, and I went up there to look for you. Instead of you I found the attorney, and learned everything. Ah, nothing but sad, sad news. What will be the end of all this?"


"That depends on God's good pleasure," said the baroness, deeply shocked and afflicted at the intelligence of the recent disasters. "God will not abandon our dear country. Let us wait for better days, summoning to our aid patience and courage, and firm reliance on the assistance of the Most High!"

"Yes, grandmother—yes," cried Sigismund, whose cheeks glowed, and whose eyes flashed with shame and indignation at Prussia's misfortunes, and with lofty resolves for the future. "Courage and hope shall be our motto. Sooner or later the good and just cause *must* triumph. Patience, patience! I grow daily taller and

stronger, and the time is not far off when I, in my turn, may bare my sabre, and fight for my native land."

"Ha, boy! — Sigismund! such words, so spoken, rejoice an old soldier's heart!" exclaimed the sergeant, enthusiasm and energy in his tones. "I fancy that I see and hear your father. Yes, yes, that is also my trust and consolation. Time works many changes. Old Prussian valour has not died away out of the land, nor will it, though we be beaten ten times over. But that is not the question, for Heaven knows it was not bravery that was lacking at Jena and Auerstadt. The fault was with the leaders, with the generals. Patience! however; other leaders will be found, who understand their business better, and then we shall see who wins the game at last. These insolent Frenchmen, now so presumptuous and overbearing, will have their day of sorrow and defeat."

The veteran, whose face glowed with martial fire, now suddenly became very pale, and had difficulty in maintaining his footing. His recent agitation, his grief and indignation at the unhappy lot of the family to which he was so



deeply and so disinterestedly attached, had exhausted his last remaining strength. He staggered a step or two and sank upon a chair. Sigismund and the baroness, observing his indisposition, hastened to his side with expressions of sympathy and anxiety.

"You are wounded, Frank?" was the old lady's first exclamation.

"No, no, not a scratch," was the reply. "A bit of bread and a glass of wine will soon make this old body worth as much as ever it is likely to be again," added Sabertash, with a feeble attempt to smile; "I am fasting since yesterday."

"And I not to think of it!" exclaimed the baroness, self-reproachfully. "Shame upon me! Quick, my son, bring everything that is in the house. Forgive me, good Frank. Joy at seeing you again, and grief at the terrible news you bring, made me forget all things besides."

"I had forgotten too," replied the sergeant. "If this sudden weakness had not taken me, I should have thought little about eating and drinking. But man is a poor creature after all, especially when he gets old. I remember the day when I would have thought little of twice as much hard work."

In all haste Sigismund now re-entered the room, bringing wine and cold meat, and, with their assistance, Sabertash soon felt himself revive and recover strength.

“All right again now,” said he, pushing plate and glass aside. “And now, my lady, I would very gladly hear how it came to pass that yonder bad man—that deceiver of widows and orphans—that lawyer Brown, in short, has become lord of the castle, and at whose suit it was that you were compelled to sell it. In Brown’s account of the matter I place no sort of reliance. I have excellent good reasons for not trusting the fellow.”

“God alone knows whether he be so bad a man as you seem to think him, my honest old Frank,” replied the baroness; “but so far as we are concerned he has certainly behaved exceedingly badly, for he is himself the creditor—and the only one—at whose suit we have been obliged to part with our property, and to whom we have to ascribe all our misfortunes. May he one day be able to answer before God for his conduct in this matter.”

“What!” cried the sergeant, leaping rather than rising to his feet, whilst his stern, strongly-

marked countenance assumed an expression of terrible menace,—“what, HE the creditor—the instigator of the whole thing? Oh, why did I not know that when I stood within arm’s length of him in his ill-gotten castle and he so impudently lied to my very face. But how is it possible that such should be the case, my lady?”


“The whole of our misfortunes have their origin in the purchase of that mill,” replied Sigismund’s grandmother. “You doubtless remember, Frank, that when my son bought it, he borrowed from Brown the sum necessary to pay for it. Brown now asserts that the money was never paid back to him, and——”

“What? not paid back to him?” interrupted the honest sergeant, forgetting his manners in the excess of his indignation; “not paid? may I never eat bread again if a single copper is due to him. I, I myself, my lady baroness, saw, with my own eyes, my late lamented colonel and master pay the man every penny of the money, capital, interest, and charges—for the mean miserly fellow scored up expenses on all sides. The bright gold and the good bank-notes lay in piles and rolls upon the colonel’s

black desk ; the very same money which he had received from Count Burgstein only a day or two before. You must surely recollect that, my lady ?”

The baroness made no reply, for the suddenness of the joy occasioned her by the words she had just heard, deprived her of power of speech. It was impossible for an instant to doubt the strict truth of the faithful old sergeant’s energetic words. Their very tone carried irresistible conviction to her mind. Whilst she collected her agitated thoughts, and mused for an instant on the wonderful ways of Providence, Sigismund, whose age rendered him less liable to such serious reflections, rejoiced aloud and gave free vent to his delight.

“ Said I not so, grandmother ?” he exclaimed. “ Now do you understand why to-day he trembled and started, and turned pale, and red, and green, and all manner of colours, when I threatened him with the vengeance of Heaven ? Yes, yes, his conscience smote him, and now that our good Frank has come back to us, the truth will be made clear, and justice will be done ? Ah, grandmother, what happiness to return to our beautiful castle ! How overjoyed I shall



be once more to run about our delightful garden, and to wander at will through our forests. Now it is sure that Anthony Brown has deceived and cheated us, and it will not be long before he receives the reward of his villainy."

"Not so fast, my child—not so fast," replied his grandmother, shaking her venerable grey head. "Assuredly I do not for an instant doubt the veracity of our worthy old Frank, but, my son, he may be mistaken. Remember that nowhere have we been able to find a receipt of Brown's, and that he possesses and has produced your late father's written acknowledgement of his debt."

"Then must that acknowledgement be another shameful fraud," cried the sergeant. "The fellow is capable of anything, and there is nothing I would not believe him guilty of. Lady baroness, in this matter it is quite impossible I should make any mistake. Not only was I present when Brown received the money, signed the receipt, and restored the colonel's acknowledgement of the debt, but many times afterwards have I spoken on the subject with my late master, when we were alone, out shooting or elsewhere, and he repeatedly assured me that

never again would he have any sort of dealings with that usurious attorney, because he had been shamefully taken in and imposed upon by him—first, as regarded the price he paid for the mill, and afterwards with exorbitant interest and heavy charges, which were merely a pretext for picking his pocket, but which my colonel, who could manœuvre a regiment better than he could drive a bargain, paid without dispute. So somewhere or other the receipts must be.”

“They are nowhere to be found,” replied the baroness, hopelessly “Convinced myself that some fraud had been practised, I instituted a rigid search through the whole of the family papers, examining with my own eyes every drawer and desk and box, but all in vain. I found nothing that could in the remotest degree avail as proof of payment.”

“Then the late colonel must have put away the papers in some secret place of safety, known to himself alone, and sooner or later they will come to light,” said the old sergeant. “As to a mistake, it is here quite out of the question there is no possibility of such a thing, for I am quite sure of what I say, and am ready, at any

minute, to make oath of its truth and correctness. Did not my poor colonel, when upon his death-bed, give any hint or sign that could have had reference to the papers?"

"None;—none at least that I am aware of," replied the baroness.


"Yes, grandmother, yes," cried Sigismund, eagerly. "I remember quite well that he pointed repeatedly to the black desk, and said, 'In the desk! in the desk!' You cannot have forgotten that, dear grandmother."

"Neither have I forgotten it, Sigismund," said the lady; "but what does that prove? With respect to the receipts, nothing at all! And in that desk, as I have repeatedly told you, there was not a sheet nor a scrap of paper that had the slightest reference to the matter in question."

"Did you search it very carefully, respected madam?" asked the sergeant. "Pardon the doubt, the matter is so very important. I stir not hence until I have unmasked the knave, and I will make oath in any court of justice that he has defrauded you; but still it were far, far better could we produce other proof than my testimony, truthful though that be.

Let us once more examine the desk. Six eyes see better than two. It is just probable that you may have overlooked some secret panel."

The old lady positively maintained that she had overlooked nothing, and that it was impossible anything should have escaped her. Yielding, however, to the importunity of Sigismund and the sergeant, she opened the black desk. Drawer after drawer was taken out, and the contents carefully examined; the sides of the pigeon-holes were knocked and sounded; the slips of ebony which divided the interior of the quaint old piece of furniture into numerous compartments, were pulled and pushed, in the vain hope that one of them might be connected with a secret spring. Whilst the hussar and Sigismund pursued their investigation, the baroness sat watching them with a melancholy smile. She was too well convinced of the accuracy of her search, to entertain the slightest hope of a discovery. Before her eyes, a skilful carpenter had taken the whole interior of the desk to pieces; she had seen the whole of the drawers and divisions piled before her, and then had narrowly inspected the bare sides. She knew there was nothing, but she waited



patiently till her grandson and her son's faithful old follower should have acquired the same conviction. The search was nearly at an end, when suddenly the sergeant suspended it, drew up his tall gaunt form, and, enjoining silence by a motion of his hand, stepped to the window and listened. From without there proceeded a noise of approaching footsteps and suppressed voices. The sergeant's sharp and practised ear distinguished, without difficulty, that the language spoken was French, and also detected a slight clash of arms.

"This is a bad business!" said he, in an uneasy whisper. "The French are at hand; if they find me, I am a lost man. If it be possible, I must fly."

Sigismund and his grandmother gazed at each other in terror. But the lad quickly regained his self-possession and presence of mind.

"Quick, Frank!" said he; "perhaps the garden gate is not yet guarded, and if not, you can reach the forest in a single bound. Quick, follow me!"

Away ran the old man and the young one, through the back yard, and through the

garden, whose wall extended close up to the wood. When near the door, they stood still and listened.

"Too late!" said the sergeant; "they are already there. Well, they must take me then; my imprisonment cannot last very long, and as soon as I am again at liberty, I will return hither!"

"No, no! all is not yet lost," replied Sigismund. "You must not be taken away from us; they shall not find you. There is a closet in the room up stairs, which can hardly be discovered by those who do not know it, for the door is papered like the rest of the wall, and is opened by an imperceptible spring. They may search the whole house through,—they will not discover you."

"'Tis well," said Sabertash; "we can but try it. Against superior force, stratagem is the only resource, and although it vexes me to think that I, an old Prussian soldier, should have to hide from the French, I do it cheerfully, that I may the sooner unmask that Lawyer Brown. The fellow should be called Black, not Brown, for his heart is as black as night."

Whilst this whispered conversation was carried on, the two men—for Sigismund, if a boy in years, was already a man in courage and decision of character—had hastened back to the house, shut and locked the door, and re-entered the room in which the baroness anxiously awaited the result of their attempt at flight.

“Too late!” said Sigismund. Frank must hide himself. Here is the cupboard!”

Just as Sigismund opened it, there was a sudden and violent knocking at the house door.

“Open the door, open it immediately!” shouted several voices in French and in bad German.

“Knock away!” said Sigismund. “We will open, when it suits us. Now then, Frank, quick, into the closet!”

The old soldier, yielding to necessity, but not without a muttered grumble, squeezed himself through the narrow door. The recess was roomy enough to hold him comfortably; Sigismund carefully closed the door, and, having satisfied himself that the spring bolt, which was opened by a pressure upon a par-

ticular part of the paper, had shot into its groove, he went to the window, opened it, and put out his head.

"Who is there?" he coolly enquired.

"*Ouvrez vite!* open quickly!" replied a voice from below. "Open at once, or we smash the door!"

"Open the door, my young master," peremptorily exclaimed a second voice, which Sigismund immediately recognized as that of Anthony Brown. "The French are here, seeking a Prussian fugitive. They came to my house first, and compelled me to conduct them hither, because they had received intelligence that the man they seek had taken refuge in your house. Open quickly, or they will break in the door with their muskets!"

"There is no one here but I and my grandmother," replied Sigismund, without moving to execute the lawyer's insolent command.

"Will you open the door or not?" shouted a Frenchman impatiently. And as he spoke he let the butt of his musket fall heavily against the house door, as if to make his words more impressive.

"I will open the door, since you desire it,"

said Sigismund. "Have but a moment's patience!"

Shutting the window, he spoke in a hasty whisper to his grandmother and to the sergeant.

"Be on your guard!" said the bold and quick-witted lad; "Brown is below, and has guided the soldiers hither. Without a doubt, it is he who has betrayed Frank, hoping by this villainy to get rid of him. But keep still, my dear old friend, and fear nothing. They will have a long search before finding you!"

To avoid arousing suspicion, he delayed no longer, but hurried down stairs, to admit the French. The instant that he opened the door, seven or eight of them, with Brown at their head, pressed forward into the house.

"Where is he?" said one who seemed in command; "where is the Prussian? He *must* be here!"

"You are mistaken, sir," replied Sigismund, in French; "you will find no one here, except an old lady and a young lad."

"*Nous verrons!* We will see," retorted the Frenchman. "Shew me the way up stairs,

sir ; and you," he added, addressing him to his soldiers, "search the whole place thoroughly ; house and stables, barn, garden, and everything."

Sigismund had no choice but to obey the officer's commands. He conducted him up stairs, whilst the soldiers dispersed over the premises, rummaging in every nook and corner, in fruitless search of traces of the fugitive. The officer quietly awaited the result of this search. One after the other, all the soldiers returned, and reported to him that they had discovered nothing. He turned impatiently and angrily to Brown.

"What means this, sirrah?" he demanded ; "have you dared to trifle with me ? Is your intelligence well founded or worthless ? Where is the man we seek ? Do you think it is a pleasant thing to turn out of good quarters at this time of night, after a hard day's march, and to find, after all, that one has been sent on a fool's errand ? Where is the man whose place of refuge you betrayed to us ?"

"How can I tell?" growled Brown, very wrath at having his treachery thus disclosed before the baroness and Sigismund. "The

man was at my place, and told me he was coming on here; so here he must be—look again. He has hidden himself somewhere. The boy knows well enough where he is to be found; question him.”

The officer looked sternly and enquiringly at Sigismund, who only shrugged his shoulders.

“You see well enough,” he said, “that there is nobody here besides my grandmother and myself.”

“Pooh!” we are not to be so easily bamboozled,” replied the Frenchman, angrily.—“Search the house again, men; every corner, in and out of it. And woe betide you, young gentleman, if we do find the man! You shall be treated to a good gallop, tied to a horse’s tail. Come, soldiers, quick to work!”


Once more the soldiers scattered themselves in quest of the fugitive, and Brown, who perhaps did not feel very comfortable under Sigismund’s glance of unutterable contempt, joined them and left the room. The officer, Sigismund, and his grandmother, awaited, in silence and anxiety, the result of this new search. Sigismund had little or no fear for the sergeant’s safety, but he was uneasy lest the

soldiers should discover his horse, and lest the vile traitor Brown should then be able to complete his treason by identifying the charger as belonging to the hussar. Fortunately the stable in which Ali had been put was in an out-of-the-way corner, and Sigismund still hoped that, thanks to the darkness, it might escape the sharp eyes of the French.

This hope was soon proved a vain one. Suddenly a triumphant shout was heard. Amidst the exulting exclamations of the French, Brown's harsh sharp voice was plainly distinguishable.

"That is his!" croaked the lawyer. "That is the grey horse he rode! When the steed is found, the rider is not far off. Now we shall have him to a certainty!"

Almost at the same moment several soldiers clattered up the stairs, each one eager to be the first bearer of the news. They reported that a grey horse was in the stable below, and was unquestionably the same which had drawn the cart they had been all day pursuing. They knew him by particular marks, which, in the course of the chase, they had more than once been near enough to distinguish.



The officer listened with deep attention. He was evidently strongly interested by what he heard.

"What?" cried he starting from his chair; "the grey which that Prussian drove; the grey with the military chest?"

"The same, the same!" cried the soldiers with one voice; "it is impossible to mistake it."


"By heavens!" cried the officer, with sparkling eyes, and impatiently twisting his mustache; "we must catch that horse's rider somehow or other. This makes the matter serious; the fellow has run off with a military chest we had captured, has led us a wild goose chase the whole day, and ended by knocking my best friend and comrade out of his saddle with a carbine bullet. Young sir," he continued, turning fiercely upon Sigismund; "no more subterfuges! no more shuffling! You *must* know where the man we seek is hidden. Speak out, and at once; this is no longer a joke, but earnest. Where is the Prussian fugitive?"

"I know nothing of the matter," replied Sigismund, firmly; "look for him yourself; you occupy our house, all the power is in

your hands, and we can offer no opposition. The wretch who brought you here may tell you what you want to know, and complete his abject treachery. From me you will learn nothing."

"The lad speaks boldly," said the officer. "Have a care, my young gamecock, you may crow a different note just now. But no matter. Hunt about, my lads, the prize will repay the trouble. If we recapture the treasure, a portion of it belongs to us. Be smart then! The Prussian must be hidden somewhere here; he cannot have escaped; our measures were too well taken."

Once more, and with zeal stimulated by greed of gain, the soldiers recommenced their man-hunt. Like ferrets in quest of a rat, they made their way into every nook, from cellar to loft, probing with their bayonets each cranny and crevice, thrusting the same deadly weapon into the hay and straw in the barn, at risk of killing him they sought, had he indeed lain concealed there. Meanwhile, the lawyer had fallen into a brown study. The military chest, of which he had just heard speak, was the subject of his avaricious meditations.



“He had it not with him,” thought Brown to himself, “consequently he must have hidden it somewhere. Idiot that I was to bring the French here! If they find old Frank, they will assuredly force him to reveal the hiding-place, and then all is up with the treasure! They must not find him. He must remain concealed. If he once gets clean off, he is sure to come back here when the coast is clear, and I shall find plenty of ways of worming his secret out of the old simpleton. And then—aye, then the chest is mine!—mine, with all its contents! Patience, and a little dexterity, and the thing is done. How shall I manage to lead the French off the scent?”

The worthy limb of the law had not yet hit upon a satisfactory device for getting rid of the French allies whom he had been in such haste to bring down upon the house, when he was aroused from his ill-omened brooding by the return of the soldiers. They were surly and crestfallen, for their search had been fruitless as before, and their vexation found vent in muttered curses and profane oaths, which the presence of their officer scarcely sufficed to restrain. The officer was not much more

temperate in his language than were his men.

"What, still foiled," shouted he, "this makes an end of my patience! Speak, sir, and say where the man is hidden! Speak, or I'll shoot you like a dog!"

"How can I tell where he is!" calmly replied Sigismund, unmoved by the savage threat. "You see yourself that no one is concealed here."

"But the grey horse, how do you account for that? You don't mean to deny we have found that, I suppose? The horse is there; where is the man who mounted it?"

"Seek him yourself," coldly replied Sigismund; "if I knew where he was, I certainly would not betray him to you, for that were base cowardice."

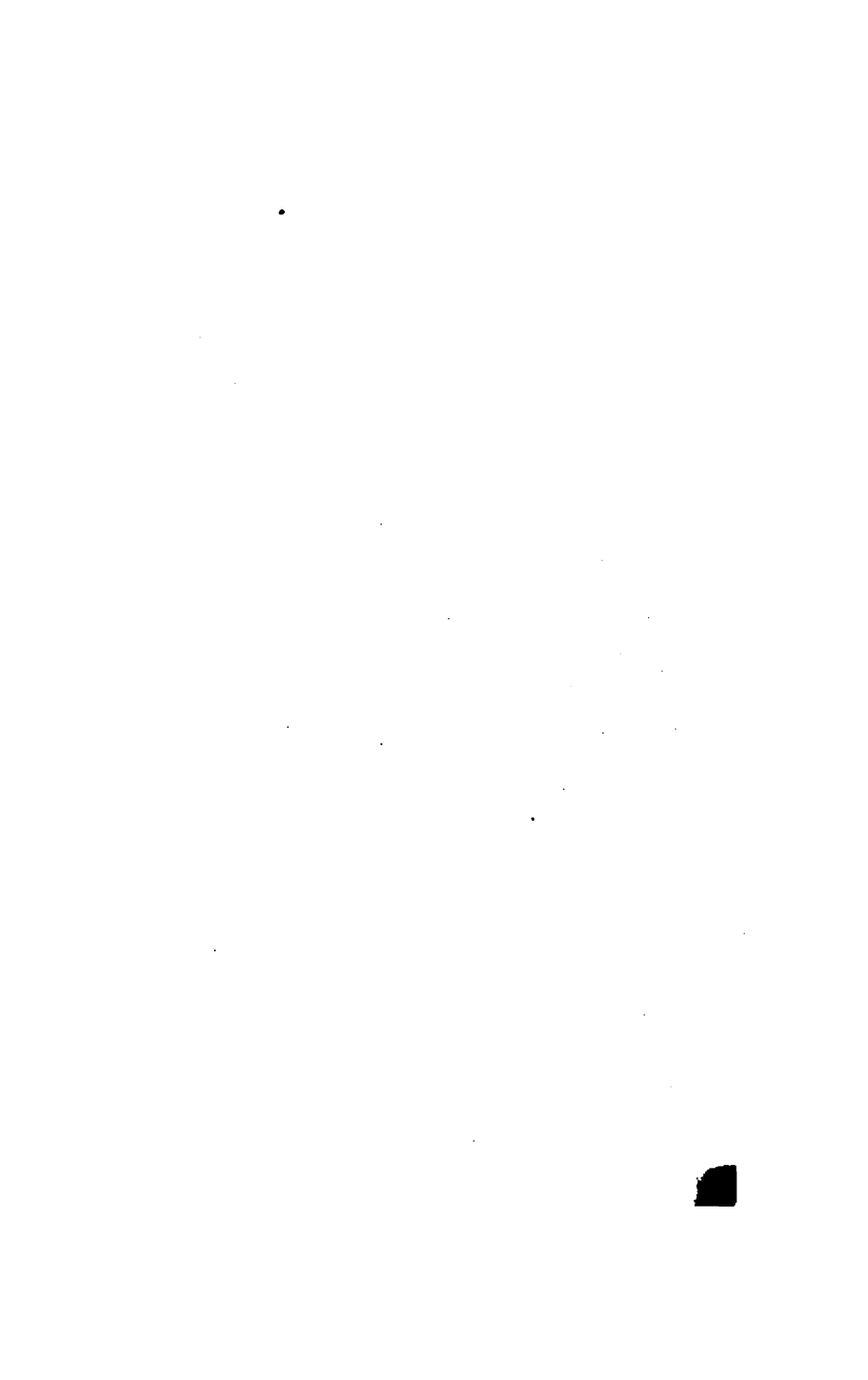
"Ha! then will we find means to draw your secret from you!" cried the Frenchman furiously. "I give you due notice, young gentleman. Speak at once, or take the consequences! They will not be very pleasant, I can tell you. I will have you whipped till the blood comes! The military chest I must and will have!"

Sigismund's eyes flashed when he heard the

Frenchman threaten him with whipping, and he clenched his fists hard. Before he had time to reply, Anthony Brown slipped forward and addressed the officer.

"Noble sir," said the lawyer, in the cringing fawning manner which was habitual to him when speaking to one whom he feared, or upon whom he desired to impose. "Noble sir, he is but a child, and unworthy of your anger. I myself begin to fear that the old fox we seek has really left his hole. The forest comes close up to the house, and five seconds would suffice to place him in safety. It is not worth troubling yourself further about the matter; that the Prussian has escaped is now beyond any doubt."

"Say you so!" cried the Frenchman, wild with rage, "have you dared then to trifle with me? I will burn your castle over your head, if you have brought us here for nothing. Out of my sight, contemptible traitor that you are! And you, young gentleman, what is your choice? To speak the truth, or to hold your tongue and be flogged? Decide at once—I have no more time to lose. And rely upon it, I will execute my threat. Will you, or will you not confess?"





THE OUTRAGE ON SIGISMUND.

"I have nothing to confess," replied Sigismund, calmly and proudly.

"Seize him, soldiers!" roared the officer, his anger augmented by Sigismund's calm and almost contemptuous manner. "Seize him! We have no whips, but belts will do as well. Cut away at his back till he tells all he knows. Quick, men, and lay on lustily!"

At their chief's command the soldiers fell upon Sigismund, who uttered a cry of indignation, whilst his weeping old grandmother extended her trembling arms as if to shield her boy from the brutality of the French. With unlooked-for strength, Sigismund repulsed the foremost of his assailants, and defended himself like a lion against the others. But the gallant lad's resistance, to such overpowering force, could be but of short duration. The next moment he was thrown to the ground; some of the men took off their belts, and his torture was about to begin, when suddenly the door of the hidden closet flew open, the brave old sergeant burst forth, his face glowing with anger. Striking right and left with his fists, he laid three or four of the soldiers sprawling on the floor, before they had time

to ascertain the nature of this sudden apparition.

"Cowards!" he shouted, in stentorian tones, "do you call yourselves soldiers, and are not ashamed to ill-use a child like that? Shame and scandal upon you?"

At first the Frenchmen stood as if petrified, so surprised were they by the old sergeant's sudden onslaught; but quickly recovering themselves, they fell upon Sabertash. A violent struggle ensued, in the course of which his clothes were almost torn from his back. With a vigour which advanced years seemed [to have matured rather than impaired, he strove against his numerous assailants, hurling one or two of them from him with such force that they lay stunned and unable to rise. At last he was overpowered, his hands were bound, and, helpless and breathless, but still with a proud bearing and a bold eye, he stood before his enemies and looked them sternly in the face.

During this short but desperate contest, from which lawyer Brown had wisely kept aloof, the sergeant's pocket-book fell from the breast of his uniform. In the heat of the conflict, neither he nor the French observed its

fall. But Anthony Brown had sharp eyes, no man sharper, when a penny was to be made by fair means or foul. The loss of the pocket-book did not escape him. With prompt dexterity he dropped his handkerchief upon it, as if by accident, and when he picked up the handkerchief, he picked up the pocket-book also. Besides himself, every one in the room was either engaged in the struggle with the sergeant, or watching its progress. None heeded Mr. Brown's manœuvre, and he quietly slipped his prize into his pocket.

"Knives! cowards!" thundered the old hussar to his captors, careless of the consequences that might ensue to him from his furious and angry denunciations; "you should be ashamed, did you know what shame is, thus to break, like thieves in the night, into a quiet peaceful house—a house to which you would never have found your way but for the treachery of a man, upon whom, from this day forward, every honest German will look with contempt. Here am I whom you sought—do with me what you will—but clear out of this house, which your presence defiles!"

"Gently, comrade," said the French officer,

sneeringly; "do not excite yourself unnecessarily. Since you are a soldier, you know what war-time means. Keep yourself cool, and answer my questions. Where have you hidden the cart with the military chest? Speak the truth: you are in our power, and it will be all the worse for you if you lie; so tell me, where is the cart?"

"I might tell you that I know nothing about it," replied the veteran, proudly, "but that would be cowardly, and since you have robbed me of my liberty, I fear nothing else that you can do. You shall hear the truth—the cart is burnt!"

"And the money, sirrah? the money?" roared the officer, furiously.

"The money is safe, my friend, and not one copper of it shall you ever have the pleasure of handling. It is buried and hidden in a sure place, where I defy the very best of your French bloodhounds ever to unearth it. It lies deep under the earth, and there it shall lie, till I can restore it into the hands of my king, whose property it is. And it is useless for you to imagine, Frenchman, that you can force or persuade me to tell you the place. You may

rob me of my freedom—you may take my life—but the sun shall never rise upon the day that beholds me a traitor to my king! So, threaten as much as you like,—I am an old man, and I fear neither your sabre and pistols, nor your fierce looks and big words. Though Providence has given you the victory, our turn will come, and you and I may both of us live to see France brought as low as Prussia is to-day. For the present, I am in your power. Do your worst, but be sure that nothing you can do will intimidate me.”

“Upon my word,” cried the Frenchman, “you speak like a brave fellow! But all that avails not, my man. The money we must have. So say, at once, where you have hidden it, or”—he drew a pistol and levelled it at the sergeant—“or, as sure as my name is Malville, I will send a ball through your head! Hesitate not!—I shall not ask you twice. This is no joking matter.”

With the muzzle of the pistol within a few inches of his face, whilst the officer's finger seemed already to press the trigger, the sergeant's demeanour fully agreed with the stout words he had just spoken. His lip curled

scornfully, he shrugged his shoulders slightly, and replied, with perfect indifference to the imminent peril in which he stood,—

“Fire away, Frenchman!—fire away! You surely do not expect that a man who has seen whole battalions blazing at him, who has charged batteries through the thickest of the shell and grape-shot, and who, if I may say it without boasting, never flinched or trembled, however great the danger,—you don’t suppose, I say, that a man who has done that will be scared by the puff of a pistol. A Prussian soldier may certainly be conquered, and forced to fly, when it is God’s will, but he is not to be frightened by anything a Frenchman can do. So fire away, *Parley-vous!* You shall see whether an eyelash winks!”

The Frenchman, disconcerted by this iron courage and coolness, sank the muzzle of his pistol, and gazed in wonder and admiration at the old warrior who looked death thus fearlessly in the face.

“Truly!” he cried, “if all Prussians think like you, are as stout-hearted as you, and as true to their king, I wonder we ever beat them. You are a brave man, comrade, and one

has reason to be proud of having won battles against such soldiers as yourself. But all this has nothing to do with the military chest, which you must give up. There is no help for it. You have your choice,—perpetual imprisonment and hard labour at the galleys, or your freedom, which I will immediately restore to you, when you inform me where you have buried the treasure. Reflect, and be wise. Once in the fetters of a galley-slave, only death will relieve you from them, and the money is as much lost to your king as if you gave it up to me. Again, I say, reflect!”

“There is no need for reflection, Frenchman,” replied the old sergeant. “Take me with you as a prisoner, chain me down to the galleys, lead me out and shoot me,—it’s all one to me! The chest shall never be yours! I say NEVER! It belongs to my king, and I doubt not but that God will so dispose events, that, in one way or other, it shall be restored to him.”

The officer shook his head and looked thoughtfully on the ground. Suddenly starting from his reverie, he seized his prisoner’s arm, and drew him away into a remote corner of the apartment.

"Comrade," whispered he, in so low a voice, that none but the person addressed could hear his words. "Comrade, I respect you! And I will go the very utmost length that my position permits. Tell me where you have buried the chest, and half of its contents shall be yours. Now then; what say you to that?"

The bushy eyebrows of the old hussar were sternly contracted as he listened to this offer, and his face flushed with scorn and indignation. But he repressed his rising wrath, and forced himself to reply calmly.

"Say no more about it, Frenchman!" answered he shortly and drily. "Were I a rogue, I might have kept the whole for myself, and never have risked falling into your hands. But a Prussian soldier is not a thief, nor am I to be bribed to forget my duty. You are wasting time and breath, and so I tell you. Treat me as as you please, not another word will I utter."

"Obstinate dog!" roared Malville, roused to the maddest fury by his prisoner's firmness. "Take that; if I have not the money, neither shall you!"

As he spoke he raised and fired his pistol. Before the echoes of the report had died away in the apartment, Sabertash lay upon the floor, whose white planks were reddened with his blood.

“Forward, men!” shouted Malville, whose rage now knew no bounds. “Forward, comrades! plunder the house, and cut down all who oppose you! We will not have made our night-march for nothing.”

The soldiers, no less furious than their leader, awaited no second command greedily to seize whatever was nearest to hand. In vain did Sigismund oppose the robbers, and boldly attempt to repulse them from their spoil. A blow from the butt of a musket stretched him upon the ground, and his poor grandmother sank back senseless in her arm-chair.

“Robbers and murderers!” shouted the old sergeant, raising himself with difficulty upon his elbow. “God will punish this outrage in a peaceful and inoffensive house. God will punish your violence — your cowardly treatment of children and women! Desist, dastardly thieves that you are! Desist, I say!”

The sergeant’s voice, weakened by loss of

blood, was unheard in the tumult that prevailed. With their musket-buts the French began to force open drawers and boxes. In their eagerness for spoil, they took no heed of Anthony Brown, who busied himself with rummaging in the ebony desk, which still stood open. It was in the midst of this scene of noise, plunder, and disorder, that the doorway of the apartment was suddenly darkened by the tall commanding figure of a French officer of rank, who stood for an instant unobserved by the spoilers, in mute and indignant contemplation of his countrymen's disgraceful conduct.

"What means this?" said he, in a deep stern voice, advancing a step into the room.

"Confusion!" exclaimed Malville; "Colonel Senard!"


"Hold your hands, knaves!" cried the colonel, stepping forward and confronting his startled subaltern; "do you call yourselves soldiers, or burglars and incendiaries? Lieutenant Malville, will you be pleased to explain the meaning of this disgraceful scene?"

The appearance and words of the French colonel wrought a magical change in the acts and deportment of the fierce and licentious

military mob. The soldiers stood as if petrified, or hastened to resume their weapons—which they had laid aside in their eagerness to plunder—and to assume respectful attitudes. The most culpable of the party, Malville himself, cast down his eyes, and sought in vain for words wherewith to palliate the shameful conduct into which he had been betrayed by his violent temper and greed of gold. Profound silence reigned; none dared to speak; at last the old sergeant's voice made itself heard.

"Colonel," said he, in his usual calm, abrupt, soldier-like manner, "you are a Frenchman like the rest, but yet something tells me that you are a soldier and a man of honour. The laws and usages of war have here been shamefully violated! Your comrades have behaved like vagabond marauders, not like brave and disciplined soldiers; for, even in an enemy's country, a soldier should remember that he is a man, and act humanely!"

"Ha! what is that?" replied Colonel Senard, in German, now first observing the sergeant's recumbent position, and the blood upon the floor. "You are wounded, comrade! There has been firing here! Who shot you, and why?"



"Ask your lieutenant there!" replied the old hussar; "he knows why he so acted."

Once more the colonel turned to Malville, and commanded him to give an account of what had passed. His tone was so severe and menacing, that the lieutenant no longer dared hesitate to give the required information to his superior in rank. He endeavoured to explain and justify his misconduct, but, although violent and intemperate, the young officer was not wholly lost to shame; his conscience reproached him, he stammered and contradicted himself. Meanwhile Sigismund and the baroness had recovered consciousness, and corrected his narrative, wherever it was false or incomplete, so that Colonel Senard was soon in possession of the rights of the matter. His fine features glowed with indignation at the misconduct of his countrymen; and his eyes flashed as he addressed the officer who had thus forgotten his rank and disgraced his epaulets.

"Lieutenant Malville," he said, in a voice that trembled with suppressed anger, "you will immediately give up your sword, and to-morrow you shall be brought before a court-

martial. You have been guilty of base and cowardly acts, inasmuch as you have ill-treated defenceless prisoners, and have encouraged your men to outrage and plunder! Fie upon you, sir! such conduct would disgrace the lowest marauder that ever hung upon the rear of an army, shirking the fight, but foremost for spoil! Release the prisoners!" said he to the soldiers, who had tied Sigismund's hands as well as the sergeant's. "And you, my brave comrade," he continued, turning to Sabertash, "I sincerely trust you are not badly hurt!"

"I think not, colonel," replied stout old Frank; "the ball passed through the shoulder, but if the wound were dangerous I should feel myself worse."

"I rejoice to hear you say so," said the colonel; "you will be all the better able to bear removal—for you must remain my prisoner. However much I may regret it, under the circumstances, duty forbids me to act otherwise."


"Of course," replied the sergeant, "I am a prisoner until exchanged; or" he added, with sly tenacity, "until the fortune of war, which

this time has been unfavourable to us, puts us upon the top of the wheel. A true soldier must know how to endure honourable imprisonment without murmur or complaint; and for my part I have nothing to be ashamed of. I defended myself as long as I could. I am ready—take me where you please!”

“Are you able to ride, my friend?” said the colonel, kindly. “If so, I will have a horse brought for you.”

“I can manage to ride, I have no doubt,” said Sabertash, raising himself to his feet with an effort, and with the aid of the colonel’s proffered hand. “Thank you, colonel; there is no great harm done, I believe; and as for a horse, that is already found, for I suppose I must take it for granted that my brave Ali is also a prisoner of war. Let me ride him, colonel, and then—since I must make up my mind to part with him—keep him for yourself. I shall grudge him less to you than to most others, for you are a good soldier and a kind-hearted, and not like those others. Colonel, you will soon know the horse, and learn his value! Only treat him well. A faithfuller and a better beast never wore saddle. Ali will

never leave his master in the lurch, as long as he is kindly treated and has a leg to stand on and a breath to draw. Alas, but for yonder attorney, my poor grey and I would not so soon have parted, nor should I now be your prisoner, colonel. But have a care, man!" added the old hussar, who seemed more moved by the loss of his four-legged friend and faithful comrade than by his own captivity. "Have a care!" he said, turning to Brown, with so terrible an expression of face, that the poltroon retreated in dismay before the angry countenance of his wounded and disarmed victim, and sought shelter behind the French soldiers. "Providence has been very forbearing towards you. Up to this day you have been permitted constantly to win at that game of fraud and deceit which has been the business of your life. But don't cry victory till you are out of the fight! To-day it is your triumph—to-morrow it may be mine. Something tells me that I shall yet return to my own country, and if ever that day does come, woe to you! for then the truth shall appear, and your mask shall be torn off, exposing you in all your loathsome baseness!"



There was something solemn and impressive in the old sergeant's voice and manner, as he thus denounced his betrayer, and menaced him with that retribution which seldom fails, even in this world, to overtake the wicked. Turning, with a gesture of inexpressible disdain and disgust from the pale and cringing lawyer, his brow grew clearer and more serene, but also sadder, as he bade farewell to the baroness and her grandson.

"Sigismund, my child," he said, "be not dismayed. Wait with patience, and trust in God. With His aid nothing is impossible. I confide in that assistance, and as true as I live I will never rest till you are restored to your rights, and once more dwell in your castle and enjoy your own estate! And you, gracious lady—may God preserve and protect you! There yet shall dawn a day, by whose light I again shall see you. And so, God bless you both! And now, colonel, when it pleases you to command the march, I am ready to follow!"

Sigismund, from whom no tear had been extorted by the threats and ill usage to which he had been exposed, sobbed aloud, as he

threw himself into the arms of his old play-mate, who tenderly kissed his forehead. Then Sabertash gently disengaged himself from his embrace, and pointed to the baroness.

"There is your place, my son!" he said. "Love and cherish and guard her, until it is vouchsafed to me to return to you. Then will we work together. Heaven bless you, my brave boy!"

Once more he squeezed the hand of the weeping lad; cast a last look of respectful affection at the baroness, and followed the colonel—who had beheld this scene with an expression of lively interest—out of the house. In another minute the premises were cleared of the uninvited and most unwelcome guests, and then the monotonous tramp of the well-drilled soldiers was heard more and more faintly, until it died away in the distance. Sigismund knelt down before his grandmother, and hid his tearful countenance in her lap. Looking up to heaven with a silent prayer in her heart, the matron laid her hand upon the boy's curling locks, and implored a blessing upon her darling, thus early and severely tried.

"Compose yourself, dear boy," she said; "be comforted, and trust in God. In His good time He will reward us, if we patiently endure our sorrows. In Him let us place our trust!"

"But poor Frank!" cried Sigismund, with a deep sigh; "so brave, so good, so faithful! Could he but be rescued! For my sake he betrayed himself into a captivity which breaks his heart!"

"God will strengthen him to endure it, my child!" replied the baroness. "Doubtless it was for its own all-wise purpose, that Providence sent him to us. I doubt not that we shall see him again, and that we, as well as our country, shall one day happily emerge from the sorrow that now oppresses us, and the darkness by which we are surrounded."

His grandmother's words, solemnly and confidently spoken, made a deep impression upon Sigismund.

"You are right, dearest grandmother," he said, rising to his feet and dashing the tears from his eyes. "God's hand is surely visible in all that has happened to us this day,

and He will not leave His work incomplete. Hope and courage, faith and patience: let those four words be our motto, and console us in these days of heavy affliction!"

CHAPTER V.

GENEROUS REVENGE.

AFTER all that Sigismund had gone through, it will hardly be a matter of wonder that, when he at last got to bed, he slept but little, and that his slumbers were broken by uneasy and painful dreams. He rose very early, and betook himself forthwith to the baroness, to communicate to her an idea that had come into his head as he lay tossing to and fro on his restless couch, and which he was anxious immediately to put into execution. This was, to walk over to the village of Benkendorf to see the old sergeant, to procure him some little alleviation of his condition, and even, if possible, to obtain his release. The baroness greatly approved the plan, and gave him a small roll of coin to be clandestinely transmitted to the prisoner. She also told him to get from Frank a written declaration that he

had been present at the repayment of the sum of money, under pretext of whose non-payment Brown had contrived to dispossess them of their property. Promising strictly to follow all her injunctions, Sigismund set out for Benkendorf at a rapid pace.

It was still early when he reached the village, but on approaching it he perceived, to his grievous disappointment, that he had come too late, and that his walk was fruitless. Instead of the stir and bustle of troops, a mournful stillness prevailed. Signs were not wanting that the French had passed the night in the village, for they had done damage and mischief enough, but though their traces remained, they themselves had disappeared. They had marched at day-break, Sigismund was informed, but none could tell him what was to be their next halting-place, or how far they were going. The direction in which they had started was all he could ascertain. With respect to Sabertash, Sigismund gladly learned that he appeared to be very well treated; that his wound was not dangerous; that he had ridden away upon his grey horse side by side with Colonel Senard; and that, although he looked serious and

thoughtful, he did not seem very much dejected by his captivity. This part of the intelligence was highly satisfactory, but Sigismund could learn nothing further.

Had Sigismund known the exact route of the troops, and the place to which they were bound, he would have felt disposed to follow, and to try to overtake them. But he did not think himself justified in setting out on a random chase, without at least, in the first instance, informing his grandmother of his departure. So he returned home, much disappointed with his ill success.

"I was too late, grandmother," he said, mournfully, as he re-entered the small but neatly furnished apartment in which the baroness sat awaiting his return. "They are gone, and none know whither. Here is the money. Who knows whether Frank will ever be restored to us?—and without him how are we to prove that Brown has defrauded us?"

"God will take care of all that, my child," replied the old lady. Let us leave everything to Him. Remember our conversation of yesterday."

"Right!" cried Sigismund. "Fortitude and

patience are to be our motto. The wicked shall not always triumph. Our turn will come."

From that hour forward the grandmother and grandson never spoke of the castle and of its new owner, who, for his part, took good care to keep out of the way of those he had so shamefully defrauded. He lived secluded and solitary in his castle, like a badger in its hole, and left it only for a daily walk to the ruins of Hohenstein. These expeditions he always made alone; not even his servant was permitted to follow him, and nobody knew what possible motive he could have to pass so much of his time amongst the old tottering walls and towers. None thought it worth their while to watch his proceedings, but if by chance a peasant or woodcutter passed by, he was sure to see Brown either sitting on the ruins, or roaming about amongst them like a hungry wolf seeking food, and peering wildly and eagerly amongst the stones and rubbish. The country people wondered at this strange fancy of the new lord of the castle, and at his regular visits to the desolate old place, which was in evil repute as the abode of spectres and goblins; and when they saw him, they hurried by, or plunged into the

forest, for they none of them liked the upstart intruder who had driven the kind old lady, and the manly, generous Sigismund from the abode of their ancestors ; and not all Anthony Brown's wealth could procure him one tithe of the respect which was still testified to the baroness and their grandson, now that they had lost their fortune, and dwelt in a house little or no better than the habitations of many of the villagers.

Owing to their secluded manner of life, it may be doubted whether Sigismund and his grandmother were aware of Brown's eccentric habit of daily roaming—no matter what the weather—amongst the ruins of Hohenstein ; or if they did hear of it, they took as little heed of that as of the attorney's other proceedings. The led a peaceful and tranquil life, and if it now and then occurred to them to speak of the past, it was only with reference to those they had loved, and who had been taken from them, and especially with respect to the old sergeant, on whose return, some day or other, they both of them reckoned with a confidence that nothing could shake.

Strong faith was indeed required to keep alive the long-deferred hope of the honest ve-

teran's return. Years passed away, and no word of him or of his fate reached Sigismund and his grandmother. One of two things was evident; either Frank was dead, or he was kept in such close custody that he could get no opportunity of communicating with his friends. Sigismund could not and would not believe the former to be the case, and therefore he clung steadfastly to the latter supposition.

The period of Germany's subjection to French rule was a period of great grief to the high-spirited Sigismund. Each year that elapsed, he felt more deeply the disgrace and the oppression of his native land. More than once he thought of quitting Germany and joining one of those brave German regiments in the British service who were then successfully contending in the Peninsula, under the command of the victorious Wellington, against the choicest legions and ablest lieutenants of that wonderful soldier whose pernicious and unbounded ambition aimed at nothing less than the subjugation of Europe. But he could not make up his mind to quit his aged grandmother, whose only consolation and protection he was, and beside whom his conscience told

him that it was his duty to remain. So he stayed at home, dividing his time between her and a serious course of study, such as might qualify him, when better days came, and when his country should have shaken off the fetters in which she then painfully writhed, to aspire to a high position, and successfully to embrace an honourable career. That better days *would* come, and that Germany would once more be free, Sigismund doubted not for an instant, although he felt that he might yet have long to wait.

At last a gleam of light—not from the east but from the north—betokened the dawn of an eventful time. The emperor Napoleon had penetrated, with an enormous army, into the heart of Russia; the second city and ancient capital of the Russian empire had perished in flames; the moment had arrived when God seemed to call from heaven to the arrogant conqueror,—“Stop! thus far and no farther!”

It was in the winter of the year 1812 that strange and portentous rumours were heard in Germany. The French emperor, it was said, had been assailed, during his retreat from Russia, by two fierce and unrelenting foes—by the

Russian winter and the Russian warriors. What the one had spared the other had destroyed; the Grand Army, whose like had never been seen, was disbanded—almost annihilated—and the emperor was flying to France.

Many were the thousands of hearts that beat high at this intelligence—many the eyes that joyously sparkled; whilst hundreds of thousands of brave men and fiery youths said to one another that the hour was close at hand when they should be permitted to efface the stain from their country's honour, to break their chains, and to drive their insolent enemy across the Rhine and within his own frontiers.

Sigismund was one who cherished these anticipations, and his eyes also sparkled when he gazed at his father's arms, which he had carefully preserved and which hung upon the wall above his bed. But still he waited and took patience, for the summons had not yet gone forth for the Prussian people to arm and repair to the banner of their king. He made sure, however, that that summons would ere long be heard; and he held himself ready to obey it. All his preparations for departure were made, so that at the first call of the trumpet he would

be able at once to take the field. In order not to occasion her unnecessary anxiety, he spoke not a word of his intentions to his grandmother. Time enough for that, he thought, when the time came. But who shall deceive the watchful eye of affection? The baroness saw and noted all that he did; it grieved her to think that her beloved grandson, her son's only child, should go forth to the fight and endure the perils and hardships of a soldier's life. But it never for an instant occurred to her to oppose obstacles to his so doing. No—their country had need of every manly heart and arm. It was Sigismund's duty to devote life and strength to the cause of his native land. God—so she hoped and prayed—would extend His protecting and omnipotent hand over the youth who buckled on his sword in no vain desire of military glory, but in the holy cause of his country's freedom, and would not suffer the last joy and prop of her old age to be taken from her for ever.

Whilst things were in this state of suspense, Sigismund frequently walked over to the nearest town, to enquire the news and ascertain what was passing. Returning one day from

an expedition of this kind, evening came on before he reached his home. The day was bitter cold, but yet of great beauty. The sun, now near the horizon, shot its red rays through the avenues of the forest, and glittered on the icicles that clothed the leafless boughs. There had been a heavy fog early in the day, which had covered every twig and spray with beads of moisture, quickly converted by the frost into so many crystal gems. Then the fog cleared off, the sun shone forth, and the whole forest seemed powdered with diamonds.

Brought up in the country, Sigismund was an ardent lover of nature's beauties, and, under ordinary circumstances, this splendid winter landscape would have filled him with delight and admiration. But upon the day in question he walked rapidly along, his eyes fixed upon the ground, engrossed by thoughts that flushed his cheek, and quickened the beating of his heart; for he had received in the town intelligence of the most important nature. All the rumours that had been current, concerning the disasters of the French army, were now fully and officially confirmed, and the expectation was universal that the King of Prussia would

draw the sword and appeal to the patriotism of his subjects. Sigismund was firmly resolved to be one of the first to respond to the appeal and to range himself beneath the national banner. And it was with thoughts of battle and of victory that his heart swelled high during his solitary walk through the forest.

"The hour has come!—come at last!" said he to himself. "Ah, if our brave old sergeant were but here to fight by my side! How he would rejoice! How great would be his exultation that the time has at last come to avenge our sad reverses, to turn defeat into victory, and to humble the insolent foe who so deeply humbled us. I well remember that he used to say, 'their turn to-day—ours to-morrow.' Well, to-morrow has come at last. We have not despaired. Jena shall yet be avenged, and Prussia be free!"

Whilst Sigismund strode stoutly along, full of hope and enthusiasm, and beholding, in imagination, the last French uniform flying across the Rhine, his attention was suddenly arrested by a low groaning near at hand. He stood still and listened. The groans were repeated, ending in a faint whimpering noise,

so inexpressibly piteous that it went to his very heart.

“Good heavens!” he exclaimed, hastening in the direction of the sound, “that must surely be the voice of a man in the agonies of death! And in such bitter cold as this, when one’s very breath freezes! Hallo!” he shouted aloud, “where are you, friend? Speak, here is help at hand.”

A feeble cry, whether of pain or joy Sigismund was unable to distinguish, replied to this call; and the next instant, from out of the snow which covered the frost-bound earth, and at scarcely three paces from where he stood, there slowly arose a figure that seemed the very personification of the horrors and calamities of war. It was that of a man, upon whose wasted features hunger and suffering were so plainly written, that Sigismund felt his heart melt with compassion. Pale as death, with blue lips, and with deeply sunken eyes, whose wild, wandering expression seemed to denote that misery had brought their owner to the verge of insanity, the unfortunate wretch gazed at Sigismund, and extended towards him his trembling arms. His head was wrap-

ped round with a tattered and blood-stained cloth ; his scanty clothing, consisting of rags and of a woman's cloak, torn and thread-bare, was altogether inadequate to shield him against the bitter cold. The whole aspect of the man was so miserable, he appeared so utterly exhausted, and to have suffered so grievously, that Sigismund, surprised by the sudden and deplorable apparition, could not restrain a cry of horror.

"Have pity upon me," said this unhappy creature, in hollow and faltering tones ; "for the love of God, take compassion on me ! Cold and hunger have overcome me, and I can go no further. Merciful Providence, have pity upon me !"

This was spoken in French, and it at once occurred to Sigismund that this man must be one of the survivors of Napoleon's "Grand Army," a Frenchman, who, having escaped from Russian steppes and bayonets, was now marching through Germany, on his way to his own country. Thousands of such luckless stragglers were at that time toiling through the same weary journey, dependant, many of them, for subsistence, on the charity of those Germans into whose land they had, but a few

short years before, carried, without provocation, all the horrors of invasion. Sigismund's first thought was that he had before him an enemy, one of a nation and an army which had acted cruelly and unjustly towards him and his, which had abused of victory and made many a Prussian hearth desolate. The thought, however, was but a momentary flash, a tribute to the vindictive passions of our corrupt and imperfect nature. The next instant Sigismund forgot that it was a foe and a Frenchman he had before him. He saw only a helpless fellow-creature, in great misery and distress, completely at his mercy, and dependent for life on the succour he might afford him.

"Take courage!" said he kindly, addressing the poor fellow in French; "we are not far from a friendly roof, beneath which you shall find clothes and food, and a warm bed. Stand up and support yourself on my arm. Are you not able? Well, it is not far, and I will carry you on my back. But first take this cloak and wrap yourself in it: it will protect you better from the cold than your tattered covering."

"Oh, heavens!" cried the Frenchman, whilst

tears of gratitude and joy rolled over his hollow cheeks and ragged bushy beard; "what good fortune is this! Alas! sir, since yesterday I have wandered in the forest, not daring to approach a human habitation, because I feared to be repulsed, beaten, perhaps murdered. For many, many weeks, yours are the first friendly words I have heard. How shall I ever sufficiently thank you for them?"

"Say nothing of that, my friend," replied Sigismund, "but do your best to stand up with my assistance. So, good—there, you are upon your feet. How do you feel yourself now? are you able to walk, or shall I carry you?"

"No, no; I can walk—a thousand blessings on you for your kindness and compassion," said the Frenchman, pressing Sigismund's hands passionately to his heart and lips. "You are kind, humane—very different from any I have met with for a long time past, and your sympathy and pity give me new strength. Utterly exhausted, half starved, and almost frozen, as I was, hope had left me, and I had resigned myself to die! But now!—oh, sir, my gratitude to you will never cease!"

"It is not worth speaking of," said Sigis-

mund, simply. "Come, take my arm, lean hard upon it. That will do—now try to walk; five minutes will take us to my house—you can see it already through the trees."

The Frenchman, who in reality was nearly starved and frozen, clung to Sigismund, who led him slowly and carefully through the forest. Short as was the distance they had to get over, they were obliged to pause several times, for so great was the Frenchman's weakness that his strength and breath were exhausted by the few steps that he took. At last Sigismund put an end to this slow progress, which might have been fatal to the fugitive in his feeble state. The youth who, only a few minutes before, had been, in imagination, engaged in a fierce fight with the French, now raised in his arms one of those detested foes, and, exerting his utmost strength, carried him like a child to his home. The unfortunate fugitive made no further resistance: his head sank upon Sigismund's shoulder, and he fainted away, recovering his senses only when he was comfortably installed near a good fire, and thanks to the restoratives administered by Sigismund and his kind grandmother.

On regaining consciousness, the Frenchman cast a wild and startled look around him, which was speedily exchanged for a smile, when he met the sympathizing gaze of his benefactors. There was something exceedingly touching in the play of his features, in the transition from the mistrustful glance of a man who had long been exposed to hourly apprehensions and constant hardships, to a grateful smile of relief and consolation. Sigismund and the baroness felt themselves more than repaid for their charitable and truly Christian conduct towards a fallen enemy.

“Courage, my friend!” cried Sigismund, cheerfully; “your sufferings are now at an end, I hope, and from us you have nothing to fear. Rest yourself; eat and drink. Here is hot wine; it will revive and strengthen you. Drink, drink, my dear sir—you have need of it.”

The Frenchman seemed even more invigorated by the kind and friendly words addressed to him, than by the warm spiced wine and good food which his hospitable entertainers set before him. His glistening eye told his heart-felt gratitude, until his strength had so far returned that he was able to express it in

words. It was some time before this came to pass, for he was utterly prostrated by all that he had gone through, and had evidently been very near to death. Little by little, however, vitality, which had been so nearly extinguished, revived; his blue lips and pallid cheeks assumed a redder and more life-like tint; his eyes, whose light had seemed extinguished, grew brighter; and sensations of comfort and security, for many weeks unknown to him, imparted so cheerful an expression to his features, that he no longer looked the same being whom Sigismund had fallen in with scarcely an hour before, groaning and helpless in the frozen forest. Soon he was able to discourse fluently of his past misfortunes, and to detail the extraordinary sufferings and privations he had endured since the French army had turned its back on the smoking ruins of Moscow, but especially since the rigour of winter had been added to the foes and obstacles against which Napoleon's luckless legions had to struggle in the course of one of the most stupendous campaigns and unjust aggressions that history has recorded. In the midst of this narrative, during which the Frenchman became very animated and ex-

cited, an expression of surprise and astonishment suddenly overspread the countenance of Sigismund, who was on the point of interrupting his guest by a hasty question, but who checked himself when only a few unconnected and unintelligible words had passed his lips, and continued to lend a sympathizing ear to the tale of suffering. When this was concluded, the Frenchman begged to know under whose hospitable roof his good fortune had conducted him.

“Have you forgotten the house, sir?” said Sigismund, kindly but gravely. “Surely the events that once took place under this roof and in this very room, and in which you played so prominent a part, cannot have entirely faded from your memory?”

In some perplexity the Frenchman looked at the speaker, then at the baroness, and finally cast an inquiring glance around the apartment, as if trying to call up his recollections of the past. Suddenly he started, struck his forehead with his hand, and turned as pale as he had been when Sigismund found him in the forest.

“Alas! alas!” he exclaimed, “I well remember!—I am a lost man!”

“Not so,” replied Sigismund; “set your mind quite at ease. Whatever faults you may formerly have committed, you are now unfortunate and our guest, and as such you are as safe as if you were under your own roof in your own country. You are Lieutenant Malville?”

“I am so,” answered the officer, greatly confused; “and now I remember everything. This is the very room in which we made the Prussian soldier prisoner. Yes, yonder is the closet in which he was hidden—there the black desk. I plainly see that a just Providence has brought me back for punishment to the very spot where I sinned. That is the only time in my life that I forgot the humanity due to a defenceless prisoner; and often since then have I repented my misconduct. It was the desire of gold that blinded me. When I heard of the military chest which your friend had wrenched from our hands—when I conceived a hope of recovering it and of benefiting by its contents, then—then did I commit the crime which I shall eternally lament and feel ashamed of. The prisoner was your friend—God has delivered me into your hands—revenge yourself

—you have a right to do so, and I shall not murmur.”

“I have already told you not to entertain the least apprehension,” replied Sigismund; “if Providence has so disposed events that you have become our guest, it is not that we should repay evil for evil. Foreign oppression has not yet so degraded us Germans that we have forgotten the sacred rights of hospitality. Neither from my grandmother nor myself have you anything to fear, although I cannot deny that the recollection of that night is very painful to me, because the loss of my friend occasioned me great sorrow and great prejudice. Had you not then snatched him away from amongst us, before this time we should probably have recovered the property we have been despoiled of. But no matter—what is past cannot be altered, and our roof shall protect you. Shall it not so, dear grandmother?”

The venerable baroness had witnessed this scene with a gentle smile upon her benevolent countenance.

“Our guest,” she said, “may be very sure that I harbour no hostile feelings towards him, when I tell him that I recognized him as soon

as he entered the room. Had I felt ill-disposed towards him, I would not have received him here. But he is sick, suffering, and unfortunate, and consequently he is no longer our enemy. You caused us much sorrow in former days, sir, but doubtless your duty commanded you to take our friend prisoner, and if you were somewhat rough in your mode of doing it, why, you yourself recognize and regret your fault, and therefore let us neither think nor speak of it any more."

The Frenchman, who at first had evidently felt serious alarm lest his former violence should be retaliated upon him, now gazed more tranquilly, and with unfeigned admiration, alternately at the old lady and at the youth, both of whom had just given him so noble an example of charity and magnanimous forbearance—repelling with scorn, and as utterly unworthy of them, the idea of revenge upon a feeble and defenceless foe.

"If this be German vengeance," he exclaimed, "truly it does honour to the country where it is practised. This is great and generous indeed, and the remembrance of it will abide with me to the last hour of my life. But

one thing greatly puzzles me. How is it possible that the captivity of that old soldier can have occasioned you such serious loss?"

Sigismund explained how it was that in Sabertash's evidence lay his only hope of recovering the property of which he had been deprived. Malville listened to the tale with visible agitation, and with many a repentant pang. When he had heard all, he seized Sigismund's hand, and pressed it warmly.

"'Tis too much!" he exclaimed; "too much! I sink beneath the weight of gratitude you lay upon me. It must indeed be a noble and a generous soul that can thus freely pardon the foe from whom it has endured such injury, —and not only pardon him, but overwhelm him with Christian love and kindness. It is a precious lesson that I now receive, and it shall not be lost upon me. Meanwhile, I vow, by all that I hold most dear and sacred, to do everything in my power to atone the harm I have done you. If the old man still lives, he shall be restored to liberty, though it cost me my life. It is the very least I can do, to shew my sense of your goodness and kind treatment."

"You think, then, that there still is hope?" cried Sigismund, eagerly. "You expect to find him still alive? Do you then know where he is kept prisoner?"

"I do not know," replied Malville; "but I have some interest with government; I have relatives in high places, and of great influence; and when once I get back to France I will not rest an instant until I have learned where your honest and gallant old friend is detained. I pledge you my word of honour—the word of a French officer, which has never yet been broken—that your friend shall be restored to you, if he be still of this world."

"That would indeed be a great piece of good fortune for us," said the baroness. "Your favourite proverb might then be realized, Sigismund."

"What proverb is that," inquired Malville.

"A very old one," replied the youth, smiling. "'Your turn to-day, mine to-morrow!' It was a favourite saying of my late father's, and Sabertash and I caught it from him."

"And a good proverb it is," said the Frenchman, "and one that is every day realized in this changeable world, where man's destinies


vary like the wind, and he who prospers has the most need to guard against adversity, the result of his own arrogance and pride. Look only at the difference between my last visit and the present one. Then we were victors, crowned with laurels, triumphant and exulting. And to-day behold us!—vanquished, miserable; our laurels buried in Russian snows; our hopes of conquest crushed; our country, perhaps, endangered. Alas! it is now our turn for disaster. Were your friend here, how justly he might exult over me! Jena and Russia,—there is a chasm between the names, and we have fallen into the gulf. Well, I at least may thank my guardian angel for delivering me into the hands of such enemies as you are. I find no words suitable to express my gratitude.”

“It is quite unnecessary to seek them,” replied Sigismund, smiling. “If you should indeed succeed in procuring the liberty of our excellent old friend, it would be for us to talk of gratitude, and to hold ourselves your debtors.”

“Enough spoken,” said Malville, with soldierly frankness, “I have pledged my word,

and I will honourably redeem it. Once more I say, that if your friend still lives he shall speedily be restored to you; and I earnestly hope that with his aid you may regain your rightful property from the traitor who is the cause of all your misfortunes. But for his treacherous information, we should never have dreamt of searching your house. But for him, too, I should not have upon my conscience the shame and regret of having ill-used a prisoner. The fellow is odious to me, and assuredly the prospect of exposing his crime will not lessen my zeal for your friend's liberation."

The time passed quickly in unreserved and friendly conversation, until Malville at last felt the necessity of repose. It were hard to describe the delightful sensation with which he extended in a warm and comfortable bed that weary frame, which for many weeks had known no better couch than the snow or the frozen earth. Scarcely had he laid his head upon the pillow, when his eyes closed in the deep sleep of exhaustion. Light and balmy were the slumbers which that night visited the eyelids of the baroness and Sigismund, for their hearts



were cheered with the consciousness of a kind and generous action. They had taken the noblest revenge man can take upon his foe—that revenge which consists in returning good for evil.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE TABLES TURNED.

WEEKS passed away, bringing no change in the retired and peaceful life led by our friends in the cottage at Hohenberg. Malville had long since quitted its hospitable roof and departed for his own country; but Sigismund and the baroness had as yet received no intelligence from him. They were themselves too strictly honourable to suspect dishonourable conduct in others, or to suppose, for an instant, that he would fail to keep his promise and to obtain old Frank's freedom, if that were in his power. And Sigismund, sanguine as ever, often gazed up the road, or walked a league or two along it, in hopes of seeing the hussar's tall figure appear in the distance.

Day succeeded day, however, and this fondly-cherished hope was still unfulfilled. On foot and on horseback, in cart and chaise, many

were the travellers who passed along the road, but Sabertash was not amongst them.

Another of Sigismund's long-cherished hopes was destined to earlier realization. One day—it was early in April—he came hurrying home from the town, with sparkling eyes and joyful countenance, and clasped his grandmother in his arms.

“The time has come, dearest mother!” he exclaimed. “Our king summons us to arms; and I, grandmother, I must obey the call!”

The excellent lady grew a little pale, but she had long foreseen what must come to pass, and had expected some such announcement; quickly checking her emotion, she folded her hands in silent prayer, and looked devoutly up to heaven.

“Yes, my child,” she then said, in a low voice, which trembled a very little, but yet had decision in its tone, “yes, you must obey the call, and far be it from me to dissuade you, or to make your departure more painful than under any circumstances it must be. Duty to one's country should be joyfully fulfilled. Depart then, my dear son, and God be with you. He will surely protect and watch over you,





THE FAREWELL.

and grant victory to the good cause. The time is come for Germany to break its chains:—depart, in God's name, and fight bravely for your king and country!"

Tenderly embracing and kissing her beloved grandchild, the baroness then betook herself to her own apartment, lest womanly weakness and grief for his loss should belie her courageous words. Whilst she knelt and prayed for his preservation, Sigismund took down the arms he had inherited from his father, and carefully wiped from them every speck of dust. His bold, fearless eyes glanced proudly as he gazed at them, and he repeated his grandmother's last words.

"Forward!" said he to himself, "forward to the field, and fight bravely for king and country!"

Partings are always painful, however much reason may strive to repress the throbs of natural affection, and we shall not attempt to describe the separation of Sigismund from his grandmother, when the moment of departure actually came. Many were the blessings she heaped upon the head of him who for years had cheered her old age, and converted her

solitude into a paradise by his affection and attentions. Many were the tears she shed when he turned his back upon his native valley to join the Prussian army, then mustering in Silesia.

It is not our intention to write a history of the war that then commenced, and in whose earliest battles, at Lutzen and at Bautzen, Sigismund fought most gallantly, distinguishing himself in both of those bloody engagements, and receiving in the latter, from the sword of a French cuirassier, a considerable gash across the forehead. He cared little, however, for the wound, which quickly healed, and the scar it left became him well, as did also the decoration of the Iron Cross, bestowed upon him by the King of Prussia, in reward for his bravery in the field. Those were days when all fought valiantly, for it was no idle war, springing from trivial causes or from a sovereign's caprice, in which they were engaged, but a noble and justifiable conflict for the freedom of a great nation. The fight was for king and country, and, where all did their duty, Sigismund, still a mere youth, might well be proud of the distinction he had achieved. The best soldiers in the army were well pleased


to call him comrade. In all the hurry and excitement of the campaign he never forgot his quiet home, nor his kind grandmother, whom he often pictured to himself, seated, buried in anxious thoughts, by her lonely fire-side, and counting the hours until his return. As often as duty permitted and opportunity offered, he wrote her long and affectionate letters, telling her of all the great events in which he shared, and comforting her with the prospect of an early and favourable termination to the war. In none of his letters did he forget to make enquiries concerning the faithful Sabertash, but of him neither he nor his grandmother received any tidings, and Sigismund gradually accustomed himself, not without great and bitter regrets, to the thought that he should never again set eyes upon the gallant old hussar, who had doubtless escaped from captivity to that shadowy bourne whence no traveller returns. Had he been still alive, assuredly he would long ago have been back in Germany and at Hohenberg. As to doubting that Malville had kept his word, Sigismund never thought of such a thing. The French lieutenant, he felt convinced, had done

everything in his power to discover and liberate Sabertash, and if he had been unsuccessful, it was because the grave had already received the object of his solicitude.

The joys and sorrows of individuals, the tears of some, the happiness of others, are unheeded and unmarked amidst the din of war. It was but rarely that Sigismund had time to think of his private affairs among the constant changes and crowded incidents of the campaign. For some time no decisive advantage was gained by either of the contending parties. The French emperor was still on German ground, and although his generals had been beaten by the Prussians in various actions—at Haynau, at Culm, at Grossbeeren, and at Dennewitz—the issue of the war was still in suspense; fortune inclined now to one side, then to the other, and none could say with certainty what would be the result of the mighty struggle, and in whose favour it would ultimately be decided. From day to day the hopes of the Germans rose higher, but they felt that there still was much to be done before they should call the day their own, and rid the country of the foreign intruders.

Spring now ripened into summer ; the summer fled ; at last came the autumn ; the month of October beheld the hostile armies arrayed upon the spacious plains of Leipzig, on the eve, to all appearance, of a terrible and decisive engagement.

The morning of the 16th October, 1813, at last dawned. Under the command of brave old Blucher, a division of the Prussian army marched, in profound silence, but with indomitable resolution, from Halle towards Leipzig. Before seven o'clock a furious conflict raged in the neighbourhood of that city. The French troops that opposed Blucher's march were driven out of the villages of Wahren, Lindenau, and Breitenfeld. But at Möckern was the fiercest fight. There the Duke of Ragusa displayed the flower of his army, and repulsed, by sustained and glorious efforts, the attacks of the Prussians, repeated again and again with wonderful vigour. Well did the two generals know the importance of this position, on whose gain or loss the result of the whole battle probably depended. And on both sides the fight was maintained with a valour worthy of the great stake at issue.



"We **MUST** conquer," said Blucher, with cool and dogged determination ; " for if we lose this point the cause of our country is again lost. So forward, my lads, in God's name, to victory or to death !"

Inspired by the old hero's words, fresh battalions pressed forward over their comrades' bodies into the hottest of the murderous fire. The ground was heaped with the dead and the dying, and still the victory remained uncertain, inclining now to one and then to the other side.

The regiment to which Sigismund belonged had made great exertions, and sustained heavy losses, in the course of that bloody day. Its ranks were grievously thinned ; half its numbers had fallen ; and of those who still survived, there were few who were not wounded and utterly exhausted. Nevertheless none thought of retreat. All ardently desired to be led once more against the enemy, and, like old Blucher, every man said to himself, "*We must conquer!*"

A great and general effort was to be made. It was hoped that it would be the last. Sigismund had just bound his white handkerchief round his bleeding arm, in which he had re-

ceived a flesh wound, when aide-de-camps were seen galloping to and fro, carrying orders for a decisive assault. All along the line the drums rattled and rolled the signal for slaughter, and in double quick time, with levelled bayonets, the Prussians advanced against the enemy, who awaited their charge with steadiness and resolution.

There were but three drummers remaining in Sigismund's regiment, but these three did their duty manfully. Fierce and incessant was the rattle of stick on sheepskin, as the regiment advanced against a battery, round which were gathered formidable masses of the French. With a loud hurrah, the Prussians pressed forward. Then suddenly thundered the cannon, and a storm of grape-shot and musket balls crashed with dreadful effects through the ranks of the assailants. Terrible were the gaps made by the iron shower; many a brave soldier bit the dust; the drums were silenced, the advance was checked; the fear of inevitable death in so terrible a form chilled the hearts even of the bravest. Without having received the order, the regiment halted. The ranks wavered; more than one man looked

over his shoulder ;—another minute, and the contagion might have spread, and all have betaken themselves to disorderly flight.

“Drummers, sound the charge !” shouted the gallant colonel, who, although himself wounded, never dreamed of a backward step.

But no drummer obeyed his command. None heard it. The last three drummers of the regiment lay dead upon the field of honour, and the martial instruments that cheer and animate the soldier seemed silenced for ever.

Suddenly a young soldier sprang out of the ranks, threw away his musket, and ran to the spot where, side by side, lay the drummers, stiff and motionless on the blood-steeped earth.

“Sheepskin is worth more than cartridges, just now,” muttered he to himself, hastily picking up a drum, hanging it in front of him, and wresting, from the cold hands of a dead drummer, the sticks that they still convulsively clutched. Stepping in front of the regiment, he shouted, in a loud clear voice,—“Yonder is the foe ! Forward ! for king and country !”

And once more the drum rattled the charge, with a vigour and spirit that revived the falter-

ing courage of the stricken regiment, and chased from faint hearts the fear of death.

“Forward! forward!” cried some of the bravest; the cry was taken up by all, and forward they went, the volunteer drummer in front of every one, still beating the charge, regardless of the bullets that flew thick around him. With fresh courage and serried ranks, the regiment rushed upon the French, eager to revenge their comrades’ death. Again the loud hurrah of Germany’s soldiers rent the air. Again the cannon thundered, the musketry rattled, this time nothing checked them. Those who fell,—fell. There was no time to pick them up; and their surviving comrades charged over their bodies. The fight was more furious than ever; it was man to man,—the bayonets grated as they crossed,—there was no more firing, it was a hand to hand contest, and at first neither side would give way. The fierce cries of the French responded to the Prussian hurrahs, but still the single drum maintained its unceasing roll, and still old Blucher’s soldiers shewed themselves worthy to be commanded by the daring chief whose impetuous courage procured him the

surname of "Marshal Forwards!" The fight was too hot to last,—the French gave way,—slowly at first, and disputing every step; then more rapidly, and at last in wild, disorderly flight. Far and wide over that bloody field the joyous shout of victory resounded. Everywhere the French yielded; everywhere the Prussians triumphed. The battle was won! and before the smoke had cleared away, the colonel of Sigismund's regiment sprang from his horse and embraced the fearless young soldier, who, at so critical a moment, and with such happy effect, had exchanged his musket for the drumstick. His comrades too surrounded him with hearty cheers, grasped his hand, and embraced him in the joy and triumph of their hearts. The young man, as if abashed by such great praise, laid down his drum, picked up a dead man's musket, and resumed his place in the ranks.

The gallant youth, who had displayed so happy a union of brilliant and audacious courage with coolness and presence of mind, was no other than Sigismund. His face was hardly to be recognized through the mask of dust and smoke that covered it, but his com-

rades knew him by the white handkerchief round his wounded arm.

Instead of seeming joyful at the success of his happy thought and prompt decision, Sigismund gazed absently about him, as if in quest of some object which absorbed all his attention, and which he was disappointed not to discover.

"It is very strange," he murmured to himself, shaking his head and looking sadly perplexed; "very strange; I cannot have seen a ghost in broad daylight. It was he,—he it must have been, and no other. I recognized his tall gaunt figure and even his features,—notwithstanding the long white beard that covered his lips and chin. But where is he? Whither can he have gone? Can he have been killed or wounded? Hardly that, for I saw him at the very moment that the colonel embraced me."

Again and again did Sigismund cast searching glances upon every side, examining the ranks of his own regiment and those of every body of troops that passed near him, and gazing anxiously at such of the dead and wounded as lay within his view. Gladly would he have left the ranks, to pursue his

investigations farther, but that he dared not do, for he was momentarily expecting orders to follow the beaten enemy.

"Well," he said to himself; "I will come back when the pursuit is over and night sets in. I cannot be mistaken. He it must have been."

"Who are you talking of, comrade?" said the man next to him.

"Frederick," replied Sigismund, "did you notice, during our advance, a tall, gaunt figure of a man, with white hair streaming over his shoulders, bare-headed, and with a white beard flowing down upon his breast? You must have seen him! He was marching close by my side, when I advanced with the drum."

The soldier shook his head.

"I saw nothing," he answered, "but the enemy and the smoke. What old man can you mean, Sigismund? To our regiment it is clear he does not belong, for we have no such veteran as you describe upon the muster-roll. But what uniform did he wear? If you noticed that, it will not be difficult to find out to what corps he belongs, and so to trace him. Was he an infantry man?"

"He wore no uniform," replied Sigismund. "As far as I remember, he was dressed in a grey smock-frock ; but he carried a musket, and handled it like a brave man and a good soldier."

"Pshaw!" said the other, with a laugh ; "you must have seen a ghost. An old man in a grey smock-frock, with white hair and beard ! We have no such queer figure in our regiment—no, nor in the whole army. You have been dreaming, Sigismund !"

"Hardly," replied Sigismund, "in the midst of such din and uproar. I assure you, I was never wider awake in my life. Close by my side the old man strode onwards, and shouted hurrah, and spoke friendly and encouraging words to me. And with my own eyes I plainly saw him parry with his bayonet a sabre-cut dealt me by a French officer, whom he ran through the body the very next instant. Whoever he may be, he saved my life, and I must find him again, though I pass the whole night seeking him. He is perhaps wounded, and his life may depend on timely assistance."

"Better let that be, comrade!" replied the

soldier. "Here lie many thousand dead and wounded, and it will be hard work to find the right man amongst them all. Besides, who knows what it was that you beheld? This seems to me a very strange tale about the grey-haired old man whom you saw, and whom no one else saw, who cheered you and saved your life. I have heard my father tell a story about his great-grandfather, who served under Prince Eugene in several battles against the French, and who, one night, when cut off from his comrades, and hard beset by four of the enemy in the trenches of a town they were besieging, received succour from an unknown swordsman, dressed in a strange old uniform of the fashion of a century before, who laid about him manfully with a curved scimitar, and stretched three of the Frenchmen on the ground, leaving my grandfather to cope with the fourth, whom he soon settled, and rejoined his regiment without a scratch. But when he came to enquire for the man who had done him such brave service, nobody had seen or heard of such a person; and as he was never discovered, many supposed that it was a spirit,—the ghost of some soldier who had been killed in a

former siege, and who still repaired to the trenches at sound of drum and trumpet. What think you, Sigismund, if your old man were something of the same kind?"

Sigismund could not help smiling at the superstitious fancies of his comrade, who was a country gentleman's son from one of those mountain districts of Silesia, where the taste for the supernatural, once so general in Germany, has not yet entirely vanished. He assured him that the old man he had seen was no ghost, but of solid flesh and bone; and he utterly scouted the notion that any disembodied spirit could administer so vigorous a bayonet-thrust as that by which the French colonel had been stretched dead upon the field. His comrade still shook his head, as if but half convinced.

"Well," he said, "take my advice, Sigismund, and take a good night's sleep, if you can get it. That will do you more good than wandering about the field of battle, looking for a dead man you will never find. You must be mistaken, comrade; whence could the old man have come? 'Tis folly to think of it any more."

But Sigismund was not to be convinced against the evidence of his own senses.

"It is impossible I should be mistaken," he said; "with these eyes I saw him, with these ears I heard his voice, and distinguished his very words; and words they were, which—but no matter; you cannot imagine, Frederick, how important it is to me to find that old man. An immense deal depends on my discovering him, and nothing shall prevent my seeking him, the very moment this day's work is over."

"Nay, then, if you be so bent upon it as all that, I will assist you in your search," replied Sigismund's good-natured comrade. "An hour's sleep, more or less, will make no great difference; besides which, it strikes me that we shall not have much more to do to-day. The French are clean swept away. Yes, yes, Sigismund, if we are not killed before evening, I will help you, and so, I dare say, will a few other comrades. We have all a debt of gratitude to pay you; but for you and your drum, Heaven knows where we should now be. Beaten I will not think we could have been, when fighting in such a cause, but so much of the honour of the day would hardly

have fallen to our regiment's share. So, since you are sure that you really saw an old man,—although upon that point, I still beg to say that I have my doubts,—why, he must be lying amongst the dead or badly wounded, and there will we seek and find him. Only be sure and mark the place, comrade."

"Aye, aye," replied Sigismund, cordially pressing his fellow-soldier's hand; "it is easy to find again. That group of poplars, and yonder apple-tree, are sure landmarks. I shall have no difficulty in finding the place."

The conversation of the two comrades was here brought to a close, by an order to advance. The French were followed some distance further. Skirmishing occurred in the latter part of the day, and when it drew dark, Sigismund's regiment was at a considerable distance from the place where he had seen the old man. In spite of this, however, no sooner were the watch-fires lighted, than he proceeded to carry out his design of seeking him, and applied to the officer of his company for permission, for himself and a few comrades, to return to the field of battle. This permission was at once granted, and Sigismund, accompanied by

four of his best friends and comrades, immediately set out. They were provided with lanterns, and, on reaching the scene of that day's fight, they soon found the place where Sigismund had seen the old man for the last time. They searched every foot of ground, and all round about, examined all the dead bodies, sought in every hollow of the ground, but were unsuccessful, notwithstanding the pains they took, in discovering the least trace of him they desired to find.

"It is of no use," said Frederick, when they had repeated their search a second and a third time; "no use at all! You must have been mistaken, Sigismund. In the excitement of action one fancies many things that do not exist, and thus has it been with you. An old man, with white beard and hair, in a grey smock-frock, but carrying musket and bayonet—whence should he have come? Did you notice any such strange figure, comrades?"

All replied in the negative, and were of opinion that Sigismund's imagination had played him a trick. But Sigismund was confident of what he had seen.

"Be assured," he said, "that there is neither

error nor deception in the case. I plainly heard the words he spoke, and can repeat them all. 'Bravo, my lad!' he shouted, 'cheerily forward!' And then he gave a lusty hurrah. 'Our turn now!' he cried, as he charged on by my side; 'look out, you *parley-vous*, the old Prussians are once more to the front, the Prussians who fought at Rossbach! Blucher too, is of the good old stock! March, march! Strike home at the frog-eaters!' With my own ears I distinctly heard all these and other exclamations; and then afterwards, when the thing was over,—'Well done, my boy!' he cried to me, 'you'll be somebody yet, if the bullets spare you.' You say I fancied I saw the man, but I cannot have fancied that he said all that."

"Well," said Frederick, "I hardly think you can. But at any rate the old boy is not here now, and the best thing we can do, as it seems to me, is to desist from the search, return to camp, and try for a bit of supper and a place near the fire. Don't let it vex you, comrade, that we have not found the old man. All the better as it is, I think; if such a person really was upon the field, it is clear he has left it, and

consequently is neither killed nor badly wounded. So you will doubtless fall in with him somewhere, Sigismund. And when that happens, be sure and hold him tight till we come up, so that we may convince ourselves it is a man and not a ghost we have been hunting after."

In vain did Sigismund endeavour to persuade his friends to a further search. They were inexorable, and, considering they had been marching and fighting since daybreak, he felt it was scarcely reasonable to expect they should do more than they had done. He himself could not help feeling that it was of little avail to look any longer for a man who at that moment might be leagues away. So he accompanied his fellow-soldiers back to the bivouac, where they were so fortunate as to find a snug place beside a watch-fire, and a hearty welcome to their share of the contents of a camp kettle.

The first cravings of hunger satisfied, Sigismund sat apart, gazing pensively at the fire, and unheeding the joyous and animated conversation of those of his comrades who had escaped with life from that bloody day's fight.

He could not detach his thoughts from that grey-haired old man, whose words still seemed to sound in his ears. The jokes of his fellow-soldiers, who quizzed him on account of his absent and thoughtful mood, made no impression on him, and were utterly powerless to disturb his reverie. After a time, he wrapped himself in his cloak, stretched himself on the damp earth, his feet to the fire, and fell asleep. But even in his slumbers the mysterious apparition of the old man hovered over him, and he heard the words, "Our turn to-day!" and "Prussians to the front! the old Prussians of Rossbach!" and "Hurrah for Blucher! march!" and "Down with the *Parley-vous!*" distinctly shouted at his ear in well-known accents. By whom, besides old Sergeant Sabertash, could those words be spoken? Doubtless the prisoner had at last escaped, or had been released from captivity, and now made his appearance, —where he had ever wished to be,—on the battle-field, and face to face with his old enemies the French.

Whether or not his supposition was correct, Sigismund had no opportunity of ascertaining. Two days elapsed, without his hearing or see-

ing anything of the old man. His comrades had ceased to joke him about the grey-bearded ghost, and, save by himself, the whole matter was forgotten.

At last, on the nineteenth of October, when, after gigantic efforts on both sides, the great battle of the nations was decided in favour of Germany, when the French army was in full retreat to the Rhine, and the Prussian troops, pressing eagerly forward, stormed the defences of Leipzig, then, at last, Sigismund obtained a solution of the riddle that had so greatly puzzled him. Whilst assisting to storm one of the gates of the city, a bullet grazed his head, knocking off his cap, and stretching him stunned upon the ground. His comrades could not leave their ranks to assist him; they stepped over his body, and advanced to the assault. As soon as he recovered his senses, he crawled to one side of the road, in order not to be crushed under the horses' feet or by the wheels of the guns and ammunition-wagons; and, as good luck would have it, he succeeded in catching a riderless horse, which was wandering, saddled and bridled, over the battlefield. It was a grey charger. He mounted it

with some difficulty, and turned the animal's head towards the gate, intending to ride into the town and there seek his regiment—but it was impossible to get in. The way was blocked up with broken carts and abandoned guns, whose horses had been unharnessed and availed of by the fugitives, with dead baggage-horses, and with dense columns of infantry, who crowded forward and completely filled every aperture through the inert masses that encumbered the road. Sigismund abandoned the attempt to get in, and, striking into the fields, made the circuit of the city, hoping to find some other entrance, where the crowd was less, and where he might succeed better in his object. His horse readily obeyed each motion of leg or bridle, but in vain did his rider seek admission into Leipzig. All the gates were shut and fastened, and so great was the throng of troops, pressing onwards from every side, that Sigismund, who was obliged to give way to them, found himself pushed gradually farther and farther from the city. Vexed at being thus separated from his regiment, he trotted over the blood-stained fields, in quest of some village where he might hope to get under a

hospitable roof, and to obtain that surgical assistance and care of which he really stood in urgent need. His wounds were very painful, and hunger, too, made itself felt ;—as well it might, seeing that during the whole of that day nothing had passed his lips except a cup of wine from his field-flask.

He rode across the fields, slowly and carefully, lest his horse's hoofs should trample the bodies of the dead. These lay in some places in small groups, Prussians and French mixed together, where there had been a hand-to-hand contest : elsewhere they were in long lines, where the ranks had been mown down as they stood by a terrible discharge of grape or murderous volley of musketry. A sad sight it was, to see so many brave fellows stretched lifeless on the plain, slain by each others hands, and victims to one man's insatiable ambition. And sadder still were the groans and cries of the wounded, who lay, many of them burning with fever, waiting for succour, which came not to them—some shrieking for water, others invoking death as the only relief they could hope from their terrible sufferings. Although now inured to such sad scenes, Sigismund's heart bled

at sight of so much misery. But he could afford no assistance to the sufferers. It was the fate of war : those who survived would be cared for when the army surgeons had time. When that would be it was hard to say, for never, perhaps, was there severer call upon the medical staff of any army than in those eventful days on Leipzig's bloody plains.

As if understanding his rider's humane wish, the grey horse picked his way so cautiously, that he touched scarcely a single body. Suddenly he stood still, pricked his ears, and neighed gently.

"What is the matter?" said Sigismund ;
"forward, good horse!"

But instead of advancing, the grey sprang aside, disobedient to the rein. At the same time, a faint voice made itself heard.

"Ali! Ali!" it said; "is it thus that we once more meet?"

Sigismund gave a joyful start. Certainly that voice was not unknown to him. He looked in the direction whence it came, and a cry of mingled sorrow and pleasure escaped his lips, when he saw the gaunt form of a grey-haired man, bleeding from many wounds, raise

itself painfully and with difficulty from the ground. It was the old man with the white hair and beard, and dressed in a grey frock, who had fought beside him at Möckern.

"Frank!" cried Sigismund, greatly surprised, and springing hastily from his horse; "dear old Frank! is it you, indeed? Yes, surely it is yourself and no other. This time I cannot be mistaken."

"No, no! there is no mistake," replied the veteran, looking enquiringly at the young man; "I am Sergeant Frank Sabertash, sure enough. But who may you be?"

"I am the drummer of Möckern, whose life you saved," replied Sigismund; "but have you really forgotten me, Frank? I am Sigismund,—Sigismund von Hohenberg!"

The eyes of the old sergeant, dimmed by fatigue and loss of blood, suddenly sparkled with pleasure.

"What!" he exclaimed, "can it be you? Is it possible?" he continued, his joy giving him strength to rise to his feet. "You, the brave Drummer of Möckern! your hand, my boy! But, no, let me embrace you, and may God bless you, for you are the worthy son of

your gallant father ! And here is my old Ali ! how, in heaven's name, did you two come together ? oh, a thousand—thousand thanks to Providence for permitting me to see this day ! And how goes it with the fight, my lad ? Since yesterday evening I have lain senseless here, and know nothing that has passed. Tell me quickly, who has conquered ? For, as I judge by the look of things, the battle is over.”

“The French are in full retreat, and the honours of the battle are for the Prussians,” replied Sigismund, radiant with joy and triumph. “We are free at last, and I trust to heaven we shall remain so.”

“Amen !” said the sergeant, solemnly ; “and first and foremost, and before all things, praise be given to Him who has been with us in the fight !”

And the earnest old soldier folded his hands, and cast his eyes, which glistened with tears of joy, devoutly to heaven.

“Do you see now, Sigismund,” he cried, “how everything has come to pass as I said it would, and as it ought to do ? Yes, yes, the old Prussian spirit has once more awakened, and henceforward, I trust, it will never again

slumber. Told you how it would be with those *parley-vous*. Their turn to-day, ours to-morrow! And to-morrow has come at last. Told you we should be at top of the wheel some day. Well, I am ready to die now—now that God has vouchsafed me the great joy of once more striking home at our old enemies, and helping to wipe the stain which Jena left upon our colours! This lazy old body has done its duty, and may be shovelled into the grave whenever you please. My day's work is over. Victory! victory! and a hurrah for brave old Prussia!"

With these words—which he shouted with the full power of his lungs—still upon his lips, the old sergeant sank back upon the ground, and his cheeks turned deadly pale. The excitement had been too much for him in his then weakened state, and for a time Sigismund was in terrible anxiety lest death had taken the brave old warrior at his word, and had removed him from a world, during his long abode in which he had so manfully done his duty. It seemed as if Sabertash would never awaken from the death-like swoon into which he had fallen. Sigismund did everything that the limited means at his command permitted,

to recall him to consciousness, bound up his wounds, and poured into his mouth, a little at a time, the few spoonsfull of wine remaining in his flask. The wine revived the sinking vitality of the wounded man, who presently opened his eyes, and smiled affectionately at Sigismund.

"The game is nearly played out," said he, faintly; "but it matters not. Death has no terrors for me, especially when it comes thus, on the field of honour and of victory!"

"Wait a little," replied Sigismund; "things are not yet so bad as that. Care and repose will soon set you up again, Frank! your wounds are not mortal, or you would certainly have died during the past night. Here, there is still a drop in the flask, drink it, it will give you strength! And then into the saddle, upon your old grey, your famous Ali, who is, in reality, the cause that I found you at all, and then we will try once more whether we cannot make our way into Leipzig. The worst of the throng will probably now be over; but whether it be so or not, we must and will get in. Do you think you are able to sit your horse?"

"I think so ;—will try, at any rate," replied the sergeant, who was as tough as whipcord. Come, you are not so wrong, after all ; the drop of wine has strengthened me wonderfully. Well, who knows ? Perhaps it may please God Almighty to help me out of this scrape, as out of so many others in times gone by. Let us see, old Ali, if you are still able to carry your master ! Wonderful, wonderful indeed, that we three, after being so many years parted, should meet again upon the battlefield ! Come hither, old Ali ! That will do. And now give me a leg, Sigismund, and I will try to get across him."

With some difficulty, the sergeant, who was weak and stiff with his wounds, was got into the saddle. Once there, however, the old dragoon sat firm as a rock, and clapped his charger's neck with great contentment and exultation. Sigismund took the bridle, and led the horse to the nearest of the city gates. There he found that, contrary to his expectation, the crowd that was pressing in had very little diminished. But the wounds and venerable aspect of the sergeant inspired all with pity and respect, and a passage was willingly

made for him. Sigismund got into the town much more quickly and easily than he had expected, and enquired for the hospital. This was pointed out to him, and soon he and his old companion were under the hands of skilful surgeons, who dressed their hurts, and, to Sigismund's great joy, declared them to be by no means dangerous.

"In a few days you will be able to follow the army."

"Such were the consolatory words of the medical officer, as he took up his instruments and bandages, and passed on to the next sufferer claiming his care, whilst Sigismund and the sergeant lay back upon the straw, which had been hastily littered down for the wounded, and congratulated each other on the prospect of a speedy return to their active military duties. Sheets and feather-beds there were none in those extempore hospitals, but the soldiers, hardened by long campaigning, neither sighed for nor missed such luxuries.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING AND THE CAPTAIN.

IT now becomes necessary that we should turn our attention from the bloody battle-fields of the war of German liberation, and revert to the peaceful little village of Hohenberg, where we left the venerable grandmother of our gallant Sigismund living in calm and profound retirement.

Upon a glorious spring day of the year 1814, the baroness was seated in her little garden, under the shade of the roses and honeysuckles that twined over the trellis-work of a pleasant arbour. She neither read nor worked; but although her hands and eyes were idle, her thoughts were busy. They were fixed upon her dear boy, whose beloved image was never absent from her mind since the day that he first had left his home to fight for the freedom and honour of his country, and, if

necessary, to die in its defence. Several weeks had now elapsed since she had received a letter from Sigismund, and although she well knew that this was no fault of his,—for in those times of war and disturbance, many letters went astray, and never reached their destination,—she yet could not help feeling a little uneasy, as she revolved in her mind the perils to which her grandson was exposed. It was long since she had so ardently desired news of his safety and welfare.

Ever since the commencement of the war, it had been Sigismund's constant habit to write to his grandmother full particulars of whatever happened to him that could in any degree interest her. We need hardly say, therefore, that he had sent all the details of his adventures after the battle of Leipzig, of his strange meeting with old Sabertash and his grey horse, and of the various subsequent incidents.

"It is difficult to say," he wrote to her from Leipzig, when convalescent of his wounds; "what strange chance brought Ali into my hands. There can be little doubt, however, from his saddle and trappings, that he had become the property of a French officer, who had


ridden him during the action, and was probably killed. There is something almost providential in my having fallen in with him, for, without his wonderful instinct and recollection of his former master, I might never have found our worthy old friend, who would perhaps have perished from weakness and exposure. Sabertash tells me that Malville kept his promise like an honourable man. Immediately on his arrival in France, he sought him out, exerted his interest to procure his liberation, and supplied him with abundant means to return to Germany, where he arrived without molestation. On his way he learned the position of the armies, and so great was his anxiety to find himself once more under the Prussian colours, that he scarcely took time to eat or drink until he came up with them. This was at Leipzig, whither the thunder of the cannon attracted him as the magnet attracts iron. He had no sooner reached Möckern than he snatched up a musket and cartridge box, attached himself to our regiment, fighting like a hero, and saved my life, which, without him, was assuredly lost."

This was written from the hospital. Subsequently Sigismund had written further, say-

ing that his wounds and those of Sabertash were healed ; that they had rejoined the triumphant German army, advanced with it into France, and been present in several actions. His last letter was dated from the battle-field of Paris, and since then no news of him had been received.

The victorious troops were now gradually quitting France and returning to their German homes, and several detachments had passed through the village of Hohenberg. Of every one of these the baroness had caused enquiries to be made, in hopes that some one or other of the soldiers might be able to give her news of Sigismund and old Frank. But her hopes always proved vain ; no one could tell her anything of the objects of her solicitude, and she was fain to take patience, and to wait and hope for the best, as she now for several weeks had hoped and waited.

Upon the day to which we refer, she had a particular motive for thinking of her beloved grandson, for it happened to be his birth-day. Upon that anniversary it had always been her custom to make him little presents, and to surprise him by the fulfilment of



some secret wish which it was impossible for him to suspect that her maternal affection had divined. Even now, in his absence, when he was probably hundreds of leagues away from her, she had been unable to renounce this long-cherished custom. Just as in former years, early in the morning she had gone into his room, had adorned it with the choicest flowers from the garden, and had displayed upon the table various pretty presents, such as she thought would give him pleasure, were he there to see them. She could not help smiling at herself, for her indulgence in this affectionate fancy, but then she sighed and the tears started into her eyes, as she thought that he, for whom these tokens of love were destined, was far away from her, exposed to many hardships, suffering perhaps from sickness and from the want of that motherly care she would so gladly have lavished on him.

"It is almost childish of me thus to decorate an unoccupied apartment," said she to herself, contemplating, with a melancholy smile, the flowers and the presents and the holiday aspect of the room. "But it does no one any harm, and to me it is a pleasure, and carries me back

to happy days gone by. How pleased Sigismund would be, if he by chance returned home to-day, to see that I have borne in mind his birth-day, and celebrated it as though he were present. Aye, *if* he returned home! Would it were so! But it were folly on my part to hope for such happiness. He would certainly write beforehand to tell me of his coming. What a time he has kept me waiting for a few lines! But no, I do him wrong. I am quite sure he has written to me more than once since the last letter I received, but that his letters have been lost. So that it really is possible he may arrive at any moment, for the war is over, and the French emperor is dethroned and sent to Elba. And now that the troops are all marching back, Sigismund must soon come. To-day, it were too much to hope; but perhaps to-morrow or next day I shall hear of him. I will hope so at any rate."

And thus did the excellent old lady hope and ponder on, and await with cheerful resignation the return of the only being who bound her to life. For a while she sat at the window and cast many a longing look up the pretty country road which passed before her house.

But as the morning wore on, without any sign of the wished-for traveller, and the noon-day sun shone warmly out, and the baroness's eyes began to ache with straining them up the road, she left the window with a gentle sigh, and went down into the garden, where she had so often sat and chatted with Sigismund, in the cool shadow of the honeysuckles.

It was one of the first hot days of the year, and the agitation of the morning had doubtless fatigued the baroness. She rested her venerable grey head upon her hand, and, whilst thinking of her grandson and desiring his return, she gradually fell into a gentle slumber.

Meanwhile, two horsemen were approaching the village at a rapid trot. One of them, who had white hair and mustaches and a scarred countenance, rode a capital grey horse; the other, who was in the bloom and vigour of youth, bestrode a spirited chesnut, which danced under him, as if making nothing of his weight. Both of them—the old man as well as the young one—wore officers' uniforms, and both bore upon their breast the honourable military decoration of the Iron Cross. Our

readers have doubtless already recognized Sigismund and his friend, old Sabertash.


As the travellers approached the village, their horses, as if they smelt the stable, trotted more rapidly than before.

"Now then, Frank," cried Sigismund, "give Ali his head, and let us see who gets first to the house."

"Pshaw, comrade!" replied the ex-sergeant, who, by his extraordinary gallantry and other soldierly qualities, displayed in the numerous actions of the late brief but busy war, had attained the rank of captain; "you know very well that your chesnut, although he be five or six years younger, cannot compare with my Ali in respect of speed. But I know you are all impatience to see your grandmother, and certainly I won't be your hinderance. So here goes!"

He slackened the rein, touched Ali with his heel, and was off like an arrow from a bow. Sigismund could hardly keep up with him. In ten minutes they pulled up at the house door.

All was silent in the residence of the baroness, and no one appeared at the windows. At last a maid servant came to the door.



"Where is my grandmother?" enquired Sigismund, hastily.

"Heaven bless me!" cried the girl, who at first had not recognized Sigismund in the handsome officer who stood before her; "it is the young master! How delighted the lady baroness will be! She is in the garden, sir, in the arbour. Has just dozed off a little. What joy for her when she awakes!"

"Gently, my good Hannah," said Sigismund. "We must surprise her. First we will take the horses to the stable, and then go out to her. My dear kind grandmother! I am sure she has long been expecting and wearying to see me, and now here we come, in her sleep, like a dream."

Sigismund and old Frank stole softly into the garden, and approached the arbour. The baroness was not sound asleep; she did but slumber lightly; and when the shadow of her visitors darkened the entrance of the arbour, she opened her eyes. She started, and for an instant was surprised to find herself in presence of two officers, who gazed at her with beaming countenances and friendly smiles. Her astonishment was but momentary; then tears of

joy gushed from her eyes, and she stretched out her arms to her grandson.

"Sigismund! my dear Sigismund!" she cried, "God has sent me blessing whilst I slept! My dear, dear child!"


With heartfelt joy—with warm gratitude to the Almighty Being who had extended a protecting hand over Sigismund throughout all the perils of that sanguinary war—the happy meeting was celebrated by the two relatives, who, sole survivors of their family, were all in all to each other. The faithful old Sabertash, that model of a brave soldier, of a true friend and an honest man, was not forgotten. The tears ran unrestrained over the white-haired warrior's scarred and furrowed visage, when Sigismund's grandmother greeted him and bade him welcome, pressed his hand in both of hers, and thanked him again and again for all the love and care he had shewn to her grandson in the course of the war. It was with great difficulty that the captain so far commanded his feelings as to express, in suitable terms, his acknowledgments for this friendly and kindly reception.

When the first joyful emotions had a little

subsided, the happy trio began to talk of the past. Sigismund related many adventures that he and his old comrade had had during the war, and how, in various actions, they had been so fortunate as to distinguish themselves and to be remarked by the generals under whom they served, and who rewarded them by promotion. He had written home, he said, nearly every week, and on that score, therefore, his grandmother certainly could not reproach him. Reproach him, indeed! She was a great deal too happy to think of reproaching any one. Full of joy was she, to have her beloved grandson once more by her side, safe and sound, and in the enjoyment of well-earned honours. She told him, in her turn, of the quiet retired life she had led during his absence, and how she had prayed every day that he might be protected from all dangers, and how no hour had ever passed without her thinking of him and desiring to see him. Nor had she been unmindful of brave old Frank, or forgotten to include him in her prayers. Then she took the two officers up into Sigismund's room, where the birth-day gifts were still displayed, and feasted her eyes and heart

with the spectacle of the young man's grateful emotion and delighted surprise. In short, all were happy as only those can be who love one another tenderly and sincerely, and who meet again after a long and perilous separation, in safety, honour, and kindness, and with consciences that know not reproach.

"I should very much like to know," said Captain Sabertash, the next morning, after a sound sleep in a better bed than had often fallen to his lot when campaigning, "I should very much like to know what our old friend, the worshipful Lawyer Brown, is about in his ill-gotten castle. You know, madam, that I have an account of rather long standing to settle with that gentleman, and moreover that I have a strong notion of driving him out of the snug nest into which he wormed himself by the most infamous treachery and fraud. He is the cause that I passed so many miserable years in a French prison, and he can hardly expect to escape punishment for his villainy. It would be unworthy of an old soldier to lay hands upon such a fellow, but out from his castle he shall bundle, as sure as my name is Frank Sabertash. Have you never been able to find



any of the papers relating to that affair, the receipts for the money, and so forth?"

"Not a thing of the kind have I found," replied the baroness; "and I greatly fear that we must resign ourselves to see our rightful property in a stranger's hands!"

"No, indeed!" cried the old captain, angrily "before I would submit to that I would shut myself in a room with the gripeall, and beat him with the flat of my sabre, till he confessed everything. No, no, dear lady; only leave the matter to me. With my own eyes I saw the fellow receive and pocket his money and to that I will depose upon oath before any tribunal in the whole world! This very day I will ride to the next town and consult a lawyer on the subject. Perhaps he will help me to smoke the fox out of his earth; and never will I rest until the thief be driven forth, infamous and despised."

"I will ride with you," said Sigismund. "You will agree with me, dear grandmother, that it is our duty at least to make the attempt to recover that which is rightfully ours."

"Well, well! do what you please," replied the baroness. "But I fear, I sadly fear, :

will all be of no avail, so long as we can advance no other proof of our right, and of the lawyer's guilt, than the evidence of our old friend Frank."

"We'll see all about that!" cried Frank. "I am known to be an honest fellow, who would scorn a lie, and the word of such a one will have more weight, it is to be hoped, before a court of justice, than the words of all the usurers and pettifoggers in the world. We shall see! but at any rate, we will set to work at once, Sigismund, and lose no time in the business. For you know that I have another little matter to settle in this neighbourhood; a matter, too, which, now that peace has returned, must not be put off longer. You know what I mean,—the military chest. The king may well be wanting his money now, I expect, after such a war. Campaigns like those of the last two years cannot be got through without plenty of cash. His Majesty must have some long bills to pay; so come, let us to the stable to get our horses, and away to the town."

Sigismund was soon ready, and the comrades rode away. In a few hours they returned, down-cast and dispirited.

"There is nothing to be done," said Sigismund to his grandmother, shrugging his shoulders. "The lawyer is of opinion that Frank's assertion is sufficient grounds to bring an action against Brown, but the lawsuit would cost a great deal of money, and after all we should not win it, if we had no other proof to advance. Brown holds my father's receipt, either the real one or a forged one, and he will take a hundred oaths that it is genuine. So there is nothing for it but submission to our misfortune."

"No, that must and shall not be!" exclaimed the old captain sternly, and with a frown, which, if lawyer Brown had seen it, would have made that worthy shake in his shoes. "Patience you must certainly take; the affair requires deliberation, but deliberation it shall receive. The unfair player cannot and shall not win the game! If we could but begin the action! Before it were decided, many things might come to pass. It must be tried, even though I sell my old Ali to raise the necessary money."

"It cannot be!" said Sigismund. And, with a mournful shake of her head, his grandmother repeated:—

"It cannot be!"

"It must and shall be!" growled the straightforward old soldier, who forthwith buckled on his sabre, and betook himself to the castle. But there he found doors locked and bolted, and no admission for him.

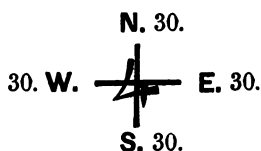
"I might have guessed as much," muttered he to himself. "An evil conscience makes men cowards. The rogue is afraid to look an honest man in the face, and will not trust himself with me. Well, it matters little. My seeing him could do no good. He would deny everything, and I should be no further advanced for the interview. The matter must be otherwise handled."

He walked away from the castle, musing as he went. Instead, however, of returning to the village, he directed his steps to the ruins of Hohenstein. His head sunk upon his breast, his arms behind his back, he thoughtfully traversed the shady avenues of the forest. In half an hour he reached the ruins, and gazed observantly about him.

"Yes," he at last said, "this is the place, and if I do not mistake, I am now standing on the exact spot where the money lies. Every-

thing here looks very quiet and innocent ; nothing seems to have been disturbed, and I am in great hopes that nobody has meddled with my treasure, although I did lose my pocket-book. I should like to know what became of it. Well, I suppose some *parley-vous* picked it up, and could make nothing of the signs it contained. No matter ! I have got the drawing clear in my head, and I ought also to find it on the stone of the tower wall. Let us see if it be still there !”

Stepping up to the old tower, he sought out a particular stone of the broken wall, scraped off with his sabre scabbard the mortar which he had spread over it some years previously, and discovered the hieroglyphic he had carved upon it. It was thus :—



“ All right !” cried Frank Sabertash, with a satisfied mien. “ The chests doubtless still lie deep and safe beneath stones and rubbish, and I can take them up when I please. Ah ! if one

might but take a handful out of them ! only one handful ! then we could begin the lawsuit at once, and Sigismund might get his rights. None know that the money is there, and if we gained the action, we could replace what we had taken, and . . . But no, no, no ! and a thousand times no ! it won't do ! positively it won't ! it would be a dishonest trick ! have a care, old Frank, lest the devil blind you, and lead you into temptation. The money belongs to my king, and not a penny shall be taken from it. So no more about it ; we must think of something else. If I had but a thousand dollars ! a miserable thousand dollars. It would be enough to turn out that Brown. But where are they to be got ? old fool that I am, to be building castles in the air in this manner ! but, what if I——” He stood still, his countenance brightened, evidently some good idea had come into his head, some clue to lead him out of the labyrinth of his perplexity. “*Sapperment !*” he exclaimed, still pondering, “that might do—aye, and it must, and shall, and will do ! Idiot that I was, not to have sooner thought of it ! well, there shall be no time lost. I am off without an hour's delay

There's a sharp trot in store for Ali. A capital thought, indeed ! and now to boot and saddle, and mount and away !”

As actively as though a regiment of French were at his heels, the stout old captain ran rather than walked, through the forest, and across the valley to the baroness's house. So great was his haste and impatience, that he totally forgot to smear mud or mortar over the figures upon the stone, to conceal them from the curiosity of chance passengers. But what mattered the neglect ? yet a few days, and the treasure should be removed, and, for those few days it might well be deemed safe there, when for so many years it had lain undiscovered.

When Sabertash reached the house, he was out of breath, and covered with perspiration. Entering the stable, he saddled and bridled Ali in all haste, and led him out. Then he mounted, rode round to the door of the garden, where Sigismund and his grandmother were sitting in their favourite arbour, and called his young comrade out.

“ Whither away, Frank ?” cried Sigismund, on seeing him in the saddle.

“ To Potsdam, my boy,” was the old soldier's

reply. I have but just time to say good bye to you and the lady baroness. I shall be back in a week, I hope."

"To Potsdam!" repeated Sigismund, greatly astonished; "what takes you to Potsdam? This is the very first I have heard of it."

"Never mind, you shall hear more about it soon," replied the old fellow, chuckling to himself, and twirling his white mustache, as was his custom when greatly pleased. "God bless you, my lad, and you too, noble lady! I much mistake, or you will see me with a joyful face when I return."

"But the treasure!" cried Sigismund.

"Aye, the treasure—it is about that I am going. But I cannot stop to explain. Must be off at once. Have no time to chatter, and shall have no rest till I have done what I've got in my head to do. And hark ye, Sigismund! whilst I am away, go up pretty often to the Hohenstein ruins, to see that nothing wrong goes on there. And now, farewell for a few days."

Ali set off at a rapid trot; and in two minutes, horse and rider could no longer be discerned from the garden gate."

"A strange fellow is honest old Frank!" said Sigismund. "I should very much like to know what has occurred to him, and what new project takes him off in this mad haste. Well, we shall know it all when he comes back."

And making up his mind to curb his curiosity, and patiently to await the explanation which Sabertash promised to bring him in a week's time, Sigismund returned to his seat in the harbour.

Meanwhile, the indefatigable Sabertash, whose impatience was well seconded by his staunch and vigorous steed, rode at a sharp pace to Magdeburg, thence to Brandenburg, and finally to Potsdam, where he drew rein, in front of the king's palace.

"Hollo, comrade!" cried he to a soldier who stood on sentry at the gate; "is his majesty, our most gracious sovereign, here just now?"

"He is so," replied the sentinel. "Arrived from Berlin hardly an hour ago."

"Indeed! That is a good hearing, and will be particularly agreeable to my grey, who is by no means anxious to trot twenty miles further. He has done his work famously, the

old fellow, and would do the other twenty miles as well, if needs were; but still it is better as it is. Where must one apply, comrade, to obtain admission to the presence of our most gracious king? I have ridden a hundred and twenty miles to speak to him, and have brought him news he will be glad to hear."

"You have only to apply to the chamberlain, captain," replied the soldier, "and he will do what you wish."

"And my horse, comrade?—where can I leave my horse?"

"Oh, there is Ernest will walk it about a bit, and then take it to the stable. Hallo! Ernest! come and take care of the captain's horse. The captain has brought good news to his majesty."

Ernest, a handsome soldier, in the uniform of the Prussian guards, promised to take the best possible care of Ali, and to stable him, according to the captain's directions, at the nearest inn. His horse's welfare—always his first consideration—being thus provided for, Captain Sabertash obtained minute directions from the sentry as to where he should find the chamberlain, and boldly entered the palace.

In those days the army had so recently done such good service, that a military uniform was not likely to wait long in the anti-chamber, especially when its wearer was a scarred veteran with honourable decorations upon his breast. When the captain heard that his majesty would receive him at once, his heart, which never beat a bit the faster amidst the roar of cannon and the clash of steel, knocked harder against his ribs than it would have done had he had to storm a battery. But he quickly mastered this emotion, and advanced steadily and firmly, with a respectful but manly bearing, into the presence of the king, who welcomed him with a friendly wave of his hand. The sovereign was surrounded by several officers of high rank, and by distinguished personages belonging to the court. When the old captain presented himself for his audience, all these persons retired a little into the background of the apartment.


"What news do you bring me?" said Frederick William, kindly. "I remember you very well,—a brave soldier,—made captain on the field of battle,—Iron Cross,—can I do anything for you?"

"Indeed you can, your majesty!" replied Sabertash, in his frank, soldierly manner; "your majesty can do a great deal for me; or rather for my good friends the noble Baroness Hohenberg, and her grandson, the lieutenant, who fought bravely by my side all through the war, against your majesty's enemies the French."

When the old captain pronounced the name Hohenberg, one of the courtiers raised his head with an air of interest, and drew a step nearer to his royal master.

"Well," said the king; "what do your friends wish? I will gladly assist them if it be in my power."

In plain straightforward terms, and without any reserve, Frank related all the misfortunes of the Hohenberg family, how they had been defrauded by Anthony Brown, the lawyer, and driven from their estates, although he, Sabertash had been present when the late Colonel Hohenberg had discharged his debt to Brown. The king listened patiently and attentively, as did also the courtier above-mentioned, who evidently did not lose a word of the soldier's narrative.



"A strange affair, indeed!" said the king. "I have no doubt of the truth of what you say, my dear captain, but what can I do? Before all things I must let the law take its course, and if my tribunals have decided the cause against the Baroness Hohenberg, I cannot take upon myself to upset their judgement. It is a hard case, certainly, if the attorney,—Brown did you not call him?—has really been guilty of a fraud, to the prejudice of the baroness and her grandson. Ah! Count Burgstein, come a little nearer, your name is mixed up in this matter. Is it a fact, that, at the time referred to by this officer, you paid a sum of money to Colonel Hohenberg?"

"Undoubtedly I did, your majesty," answered the nobleman already referred to, who now stepped forward to the king's side. "I can fully confirm that part of the captain's narrative. I have a very distinct recollection of the whole affair, so far as I was concerned in it, and I perfectly remember my late friend's telling me that he needed the money I paid him, to clear off a debt he had contracted towards a lawyer of the name of Brown. He was particularly desirous, he said, to close that

transaction, and get out of the man's debt; and I am confident of the accuracy of what I now say."

"How odd it is, then," said the king, "that no receipt for the money can be found, and that the colonel's acknowledgement of his debt should have remained in Brown's hands! However, the cause shall be tried over again, and sifted to the very bottom. The costs shall be at my charge. Right is right, and sooner or later, it will come to light. Will it not so, Count Burgstein?"

"I sincerely trust that it may, your majesty," replied the count, respectfully. "Will your majesty graciously permit me to address a few questions to the gallant captain?"

"Certainly, certainly!" answered the king.

"Captain Sabertash," said the count, turning quickly to the old soldier. "I have not the slightest doubt in the world, that the colonel paid to Brown the money he received from me. Consequently, the receipt for the same must be somewhere to be found. Does the Baroness Hohenberg still possess a certain old fashioned black desk, made of ebony, and having very thick, strong legs?"

"She does so," said Sabertash; "I saw it only the other day."

"Has she narrowly searched that desk for the missing papers?"

"She has; not once, but many times, and also in my presence. She had great hopes of finding the papers in the desk, because the colonel kept all important documents in it, and because he had spoken words, upon his death-bed, which seemed to hint that they were there. But all her hopes were disappointed."

"Does the baroness know the secret of the desk?" said the count, who awaited in breathless suspense the answer to this question.

"A secret?" replied Frank. "She never mentioned it to me. But if secret there be, she has assuredly found it out, for she had the desk entirely taken to pieces by a carpenter."

"What! the legs too?"

"No—at least not that I am aware of," said Frank.

"I think we have at last got to the point I wished to arrive at," said the count, joyfully. "The secret lies in the front legs of the desk, which are of remarkable thickness. They are partially hollow. They unscrew near the top,

and a receptacle for papers is then visible. Colonel Hohenberg shewed me the secret when I paid him the money I owed him. He uncrewed one of the legs, and took my acknowledgment of the debt out of the cunningly-devised hiding place. I feel assured that those legs contain all the papers relating to the transaction with Brown."

"That would be very remarkable," said the king, whilst old Sabertash stood petrified with astonishment. "You must investigate this matter, my dear captain, and I sincerely wish you success. There is only one circumstance which seems to me unfavourable. If Colonel Hohenberg actually paid Mr. Brown, how could this person be so shameless and audacious as to renew his demand for payment?"

"A bad and covetous man will dare many things, please your majesty," replied the count. "Perhaps he knew the secret of the desk, and had reasons to suspect that it was unknown to the family. Acting on that presumption, he first summoned the Baroness Hohenberg to pay. Had she produced his receipt for the money, he doubtless reckoned on shuffling out of the scrape, by alleging a mistake, and so to

escape without evil consequences. If she did not produce the receipts, he might be sure that their place of concealment was unknown to her, and then he might boldly prosecute his shameful fraud."

"Yes, yes, that is possible enough," said the king; "although such villainy really surpasses anything of the kind we have ever heard of. Well then, my dear captain, lose no time in instituting the necessary search, and if the papers are found let me know at once. If you do not find them, we will see what is to be done. I feel a strong interest in the affair, and certainly I will not lose sight of it. It shall not be said that in my kingdom frauds are practised with impunity. And now farewell, my dear captain."

It was pretty plain that his majesty of Prussia meant the audience to be brought to a close by these words. Nevertheless, old Frank Sabeltash lingered and seemed loath to depart.

"One word more, your majesty," said he. "As good luck would have it, I rescued from the hands of the French, after the battle of Jena, a military treasure chest which they had captured."


"Ha! and what did you do with it?" enquired the king.

"Buried it, your majesty," replied Frank. "I should long ago have given it up, but, upon the very day that I buried it, I was so unlucky as to fall into the hands of the French, into which I was betrayed by that lawyer Brown. I was dragged away to France, detained there for nearly eight years, and, when I at last recovered my freedom, the war was going on, the country was disturbed, and it is only a few days ago that I got back to my native place, near which the treasure lies. Perhaps your majesty will now be pleased to direct that it be dug up."

"Is it an important sum?"

"Five hundred thousand dollars, in two iron chests," replied Frank.

"Indeed?" said the king, in a tone of approval and surprise. "Very good, my dear captain; you are a worthy man and deserving officer, and I shall not forget you. General Hanke, give orders for ten dragoons and an officer to parade at once for escort duty, to be at the disposal of Captain Sabertash. A cart must be got ready to go with them. Dig up the



chests, my dear captain, and deliver them over to the officer of dragoons, who will give you receipt for the same—and now, farewell. I shall not forget our interview of to-day. You are a brave and good man!”

Overjoyed at the friendly words addressed to him by the sovereign whom he loved and revered above all things earthly, Frank pressed the king's hand to his lips and left the audience-chamber.

“All goes well?” he muttered, as he strode with a light and buoyant heart along the street leading to the inn where his horse had been put up. “A lucky thought of mine to take a ride to Potsdam, and have a talk with the king! What an honest, amiable, kind-hearted gentleman it is! *Sapperment!* I would die a thousand deaths for him!—aye, that would I with pleasure! But, Mister Brown—that is the best of it! He will be brought to bow at last. It was his turn yesterday—it's our turn to-day. He shall leave the castle branded with disgrace! Hurra for Sigismund! The brave boy shall enjoy his own again. Hurra, hurra

So enormous was the jubilation of the honest and unselfish old captain at the happiness

store for his friends, and at the prospect of just punishment at last descending on the head of the fraudulent attorney, that his exulting exclamations might perhaps have finished by collecting a mob round him, had he not soon reached his inn, where he applied himself to taking the refreshment for which his morning's ride had given him a keen appetite. In less than two hours a little party of dragoons halted before the house, and the lieutenant commanding them reported himself to the old captain as the officer who was to escort him to Hohenberg. Sabertash ordered Ali to be immediately saddled and brought out; but at the very moment he was about to mount, a groom in the royal livery led up to him a magnificent bay charger.

"By order of his majesty the king," said the lieutenant of dragoons, smiling and saluting his superior in rank. "He thought it likely your horse would be tired after his long march, and he does not like to see good servants overworked. I was ordered to desire your acceptance of this horse, as a mark of his majesty's particular esteem."

"Ah!" cried Sabertash, greatly delighted;

“truly a most noble and generous gentleman is our gracious king! Come, Ali! to-day you may run riderless beside your new companion—won’t be sorry for it, I dare say. And now let us move forward, comrade. I shall have no peace till I have delivered up the treasure into your hands.”

A dragoon took Ali by the bridle, and the handful of horsemen, with Sabertash and the officer at their head, rode sharply out of Potsdam.

CHAPTER VIII.


THE TREASURE SEEKER.

WHILST following the fortunes and tracing the proceedings of our old friends, Captain Frank Sabertash and Lieutenant Sigismund Hohenberg, we have almost lost sight of that notable and ingenious individual, Anthony Brown, the attorney, to whom it is necessary now to turn our attention. We shall find him in no very enviable state of mind. Since that eventful night in the baroness's cottage at Hohenberg, when the lawyer got possession of old Frank's pocket-book, and heard tell of the burial of the military chest, he had not known a moment's comfort or tranquillity. His peace of mind was totally destroyed. This might well have proceeded from the reproaches of his evil conscience; but Brown was hardened in iniquity, and some severer misfortune than had ever yet befallen him was needed to

make him sensible of his wickedness. The cause of his uneasiness was of a very different nature. His greed of gold was excited to the highest pitch by the knowledge that there somewhere existed an enormous treasure, which might be his, could he but hit upon its burial-place. To this he had a clue. The reader will remember that when Sabertash interred the two iron boxes, he made the following entry in his pocket-book:—

Castle of Hohenstein, in the Harz Forest.

N. 30.

30 .W.  E. 30.

S. 30.

When Brown, after the departure of the French soldiers and their captive, returned home and examined the book he had surreptitiously obtained, his attention was strongly arrested by this singular inscription. Even a less cunning fellow than himself would have had little difficulty in conjecturing that it had some connection with the hidden treasure. But Brown, as sharp and shrewd as he was base and unscrupulous, at once felt convinced of the fact. H

did not for an instant doubt that Frank had buried the military chest somewhere in the extensive ruins of the old castle of Hohenstein. But where? That was a riddle difficult to solve. How was he, Brown, to discover the spot? Once discovered, his course was clear. Without scruple or remorse he would dig up and appropriate the wealth. Frank Sabertash, the poor sergeant, had never dreamed of aught but the restitution of the hoard to his sovereign, its rightful owner. It never entered the head of Anthony Brown, the rich lawyer, to dispose of the money, should he succeed in finding it, otherwise than by adding it to the ample fortune which a life of chicanery and dishonesty had enabled him to amass, but from which his evil disposition prevented his deriving any true and pure enjoyment.

Stimulated by the prospect of gain, Brown did not suffer himself to be dismayed by difficulties. Commencing on the morrow of the day on which he betrayed Sabertash, he passed a portion of every twenty-four hours wandering amongst the ruins, seeking a sign similar to that in the pocket-book. Such a sign, he felt convinced, somewhere existed; but where and how

was he to find it? He turned the matter over in his mind—not once, but a thousand times, as he paced, during the long winter evenings, his spacious but solitary apartments in Hohenberg Castle, or tossed to and fro upon his feverish pillow. The signs and cyphers, he doubted not, were engraved on some stone or brick, or perhaps on a beam, or on the trunk of a tree. With a courage which no one would have suspected the deformed old man of possessing, he clambered about the ruins, ascending walls, going down into vaults, clearing away rubbish from the pavement of the courts, even getting up the trees that grew amongst the ruins, and examining their branches for some sign to guide him. More than once he sat in the fork of the old beech, which was one of Sabertash's landmarks, little dreaming that the object of his search lay just thirty paces from him. He rummaged every corner, climbed up the old tower, whose skeleton seemed daily more tottering, scared the daws from their nests, the foxes from their holes, the owls from the obscure nooks where they sat blinking the day long. He penetrated into every recess, both above and under ground, and left not a stone



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unturned that was not too firmly cemented for his strength to remove ; but his persevering avidity was unrewarded ; no treasure, nor any sign of one, greeted his longing eyes.

THE TREASURE ! THE TREASURE ! that was now the sole thought of his existence ; the one absorbing idea that dwelt day and night in his mind. In the morning on awaking, at night, when he went to bed, in his dreams and in his waking reveries, THE TREASURE was always before him ! The golden splendour of the sun, the silver light of the moon, the diamond-like sparkle of the stars, all reminded him of THE TREASURE ! He heeded not what he *had*, in his fierce desire for that which he had *not*, and perhaps would never obtain. He took no pleasure in his fine castle and broad lands ; what were they, compared to the rich deposit which the earth shrouded from his view ? THE TREASURE robbed him of rest, embittered his food and drink, poisoned his whole existence. He might have passed his days so joyously and easily ! he was rich,—no matter how his riches had been acquired, for this, as we have already said, troubled him little,—he might hunt, fish, ride, drive, feast and make merry all

the day long. He did none of these things. He neither fished nor hunted, rode, drove, nor feasted, but he thought eternally of THE TREASURE. That unlucky store of silver and gold ! what a curse it was to him ! it gnawed his very heart. His look became fixed and haggard ; his head was continually bent down, as though he were looking for something on the ground ; no smile ever lighted up his yellow visage, furrowed and distorted with avarice, anxiety, and disappointment. He had attained one object, long dearly cherished, and whose attainment he thought would have satisfied his every wish. Sigismund's castle and beautiful gardens, the fertile fields, the forests full of game, had all passed into his possession. He had scarcely got them, when a spectre rose before him, which, for eight years, never left him. It was the phantom of an iron chest ; it grinned at him perpetually, and gold gleamed in its throat. Truly he was a miserable man, was Anthony Brown, roaming about his empty castle, grubbing amongst mouldering ruins, a tantalizing prize ever glittering before him—a prize which seemed at his foot, but which his hand could never clutch. It was as if God had

chosen this means of punishing him—by suffering him to find the pocket-book, and hear of the hidden money. And truly it was a severe punishment—severer far than any bodily chastisement that could have been inflicted on him. He felt himself unspeakably wretched and unhappy ; so much so that the poorest beggar, who could have read what was passing in his soul, would have refused to exchange his hard lot, his staff and wallet, for the seemingly fortunate and pampered existence of Anthony Brown.

Year succeeded year, and still the lawyer led the same life. The golden spectre that haunted his home left him no peace, but drove him out, in spite of cold and heat, of snow and rain, of storm and tempest and burning sun-shine. Away, away went he through the gloomy forest to the lonely ruins, and crept about them, early and late, till night came on, and darkness prohibited further search. More than once, in the course of his treasure-hunt, he met with painful accidents. Once he fell off a broken wall, and severely cut himself. Another time a stone fell upon his foot, and crushed it so badly, that he lay for weeks in bed. Many, too, were the sharp

attacks of rheumatism he got in the damp old ruins. But on all these occasions, so soon as he could crawl again, he was off to his favourite haunt, toiling and scratching as hard as ever. And this went on for more than seven years. No transported criminal goes through more suffering and discomfort than Brown voluntarily inflicted upon himself. This was the beginning of his punishment.

Suddenly a terrible piece of news reached the lawyer's ears. His only servant came up one day from the village, and informed him that old Frank Sabertash had returned home, safe and sound, and with a captain's epaulets upon his broad shoulders. When Brown heard this, he turned the colour of parchment, and a cold shivering came over him. He ordered his man instantly to shut and bolt the doors, to put up the shutters of all the lower windows, and to admit no one, upon any pretext whatever, without his express orders. He was now afraid to quit the castle, lest he should fall in with old Sabertash, whom he feared as much as he hated. There was not in the whole world a man whom he so much dreaded as Frank ; kind, gentle-hearted Frank, who

would not have injured a child, and who was courteous and friendly towards all men—excepting certainly towards knaves and traitors. Of course, Brown knew best whether or no he was a knave and a traitor. At any rate, his horror and fear of meeting Frank looked very much like a consciousness that he was both the one and the other.

Like a badger in his earth, when the dogs are abroad, Brown stuck close in his castle. His teeth chattered, and a cold sweat stood upon his brow, the day that Sabertash came and rang at his bell. He forbade his servant to take any notice of the summons; but when the captain rang again and again, and shouted his name in his rough hoarse tones, Brown was so frightened that he sought about for a hiding-place, and would assuredly have concealed himself in the cellar or the garrets, had not Frank just then turned upon his heel, and walked away from the gate. The lawyer took to his bed in consequence of that fright, and lay there all that day and the following one. Thenceforward he only ventured out at night. As soon as the moon rose he would leave his castle, and creep stealthily up to the ruins, like

a wolf upon the prowl, and there he sat and brooded, and cursed his evil star, that would not suffer him to light upon the treasure. Then he would resume his eternal search, and go peering about there where the moon threw its radiance, whilst the owls screeched and hooted, and the bats flapped their wings drearily, as if impatient of his intrusion into their domains.

One morning, however, he heard accidentally from his servant that Frank had left the village five or six days ago. Brown breathed more freely at the news, and sent off the servant at once into the village, to obtain further details upon the subject. When the man returned, he said that Frank had certainly left—had been five days absent—but that nobody except Sigismund and his grandmother knew whither he had betaken himself. For this, however, the lawyer cared very little; it was enough for him that the man he dreaded had actually taken his departure from Hohenberg, and, that fact ascertained beyond a doubt, he felt as if a heavy load had been removed from his shoulders. Without an instant's delay, he scampered off, in wild haste, to the

ruins. For he was tormented by a terrible fear that Frank might have dug up the treasure and taken it away with him. Were that the case, he thought he at least should find the place where the money had been, for it was not likely that Frank would have taken the trouble to fill up the hole again. Accordingly, on reaching the old castle, he proceeded methodically to an inspection of every portion of it. Everything was as he was accustomed to see it; not a stone had changed its place. Brown sat down upon a broken wall, and heaved a deep sigh of relief.

Suddenly a cry, like that of the hungry falcon that catches sight of its prey, burst from the lips of the lawyer, and, throwing himself forward, he almost embraced one of the topmost stones of the wall on which he sat. For, upon that stone, his restless eye had just detected the fac-simile of the inscription in the pocket-book. Frank, it will be remembered, had cleared away the layer of mortar that concealed the important hieroglyphics. A second cry of delight escaped Brown, when he convinced himself, by minute and careful inspection, that he had at last

found the very signs he had so long and indefatigably sought; in whose pursuit he had spent eight years of his life, and had rummaged every corner of the ruins. There they were, exactly as in the pocket-book. There was the cross with the 4 in the middle, there were the letters and the numbers, a cypher, whose meaning he had long since divined. What could it mean, excepting that thirty feet or paces being measured from the north, from the south, from the east, from the west, the spot would be found where the treasure lay hid, whilst the 4 in the centre, it was easy to conjecture, indicated the depth at which it lay from the surface of the earth.

A West Indian pirate, accustomed to bury his blood-stained gains on solitary shores and in the depths of tangled forests, would doubtless have devised some less intelligible clue, by which again to find them, than had been hit upon by the simple-hearted old soldier. The astute lawyer, whose mind had long dwelt upon the cypher in the pocket-book, was not five minutes in hitting upon its exact application. The thirty paces or feet, from north, south, east, and west, were doubtless measured from four objects,

nearly or quite equi-distant. And one of these objects, it was natural to suppose, was the broken-wall—formerly part of a chapel—upon one of whose stones he had found the inscription. Thirty was the number. Brown stepped forward thirty paces from the stone, stopped, and looked about him. Opposite to him, about thirty paces in his front, was the old tower. He glanced to his right; there, at, as nearly as might be, the same distance, stood the great old beech-tree, certainly a sufficiently remarkable object to be taken for a landmark. Marking the spot where he stood, he turned half round, and pacing the ground to his left, about thirty steps brought him to the well. Brown almost leaped for joy. He felt that his long sought prize was now within his grasp. He trembled in every limb with excitement and delight; his eyes sparkled, his cheeks burned, he laughed out loud, and actually shouted for pleasure till the surrounding forest echoed again. This explosion of exultation over, he became again the cold-blooded, calculating miser. He bethought himself that any day, and at any hour, old Frank might return; and consequently that he had not a day or an hour to lose if he would

be sure of the treasure. Selecting the most solitary paths, he hurried back to the castle, stealthily entered the garden, took pick-axe and spade, and returned again to the ruins. Once more he carefully measured the distances from the tower, from the well, from the beech-tree and from the chapel wall, and, having ascertained the centre, he began turning up the ground, labouring so eagerly and zealously, that soon the sweat streamed from his forehead.

"Quick ! quick !" he murmured to himself; "the fierce old dragoon might return to-day—this very day ! He must not find the treasure—no, no, that must he not ! The empty nest will be there, but the golden eggs *I* shall have stowed away. Ha, ha ! a noble prize ! Courage then, and work on !"

And so strenuously did he work, that in a very short time a heap of rubbish and loose stones was thrown up, and he had sunk a hole of some depth. This he cleared out with his shovel, in its full length and breadth, and then resumed the pick, in order to go deeper. But at the very first blow, a ringing sound, as of iron against iron, struck upon his ear, producing such an effect upon his nerves,

that his hands involuntarily opened and let the pick-axe fall. He quickly resumed it, and toiled with redoubled ardour. In a very few minutes one of the two iron chests lay completely uncovered and exposed to his view. Loosening away the soil and stones from around it, he succeeded, after violent efforts, in raising it from its grave. To look at the deformed, ill-made old man, one would have thought him incapable of lifting so considerable a weight. But his burning desire of gold redoubled what strength he naturally possessed.

The second chest lay beneath the first, so that little more digging was requisite. With many a painful groan, with clothes torn and hands bleeding from his rude toil, Brown at last extricated it from the hiding place in which it had so long securely lain, and placed it beside its companion on the brink of the cavity he had made. But no sooner did he himself get out of the hole than he sank almost senseless upon the ground, utterly exhausted by his excessive exertions. For some minutes he lay panting and unable to stir; then, gathering himself up, he once more seized the spade and began hastily to fill in the hole.

"They must not find it open," thought he; "they would at once have suspicions, and be too soon on the alert."

His work, however, was scarcely half completed, when he paused and rested upon his spade, uneasy at something that had just come into his head. What if somebody came, and saw the iron chests lying there? The first thing to do,—far more pressing than filling up the hole,—was to put them out of sight; to hide them away, where they might remain in all security till night, when he proposed returning and secretly conveying the treasure to his castle. Of hiding places, amongst those ruins, there was no lack. Groaning grievously and straining every fibre of his frame, Brow dragged the two heavy boxes into the dark shadow of an old crumbling vault, where there was scarcely a chance of their being discovered by any one unacquainted with their exact position, and then returned to his spade work. He had just completed his task, when he started, and, with terrified mien, gazed wildly about him. For he heard the sound of a voice, singing, in fresh, mellow tones, one of those stirring ditties by which Körner and others

Germany's soldier-poets, had so powerfully sustained their countrymen's martial and patriotic ardour during the recent struggle against the French. The singer was evidently near at hand, and coming nearer. Brown must not be seen,—where should he hide himself? The suddenness of the surprise robbed him of his presence of mind. Already he heard the footsteps of the intruder, and thought he discerned a figure moving quickly through the bushes. In alarm and perplexity he started back, and ran without looking whither. All of a sudden there was a terrible cry, and the treasure seeker had disappeared.

The person whose approaching footsteps had thus disquieted Brown, broke off his song at the cry we have mentioned.

“What was that?” he exclaimed, pressing forward through the bushes. “Surely it was a human shriek I heard. But no, there is no one here; doubtless it was the scream of a bird of prey.”

The speaker was Sigismund. In compliance with Frank's last injunction, he occasionally took a stroll up to the ruins, a habit of which Brown, whose visits, since the return of the

two officers, had always been paid in the night-time, had not the least suspicion. The young man now rambled over the ruins, gazed admiringly for a few moments at the forest, which lay spread out below him like a magnificent roof of leafage, and then walked away, without having noticed that the rubbish which covered the open space between the tower and the chapel, had been recently disturbed and turned up.

It remains to be seen what became of the treasure which honest old Frank had hoarded for so many years, and which now, to all appearance, was likely to be so foully misappropriated.

CHAPTER IX.

RETRIBUTION.—CONCLUSION.

WHERE had Anthony Brown so quickly found a hiding-place so secure that it had totally escaped Sigismund's notice during his ramble amongst the ruins? And why had he uttered that scream of agony and terror which the young officer, seeing no human being but himself in the place, had erroneously attributed to a hungry hawk or scared eagle? Brown, as we have had occasion to see, was an extremely wily and acute man, who, although he could not escape the condemnation of public opinion, yet skilfully managed to keep himself out of the hands of justice. But, cunning though he was, there was one Judge from whose all-seeing eye he could not conceal his misdeeds; and who had chosen the moment when this bad man thought himself on the

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eve of the accomplishment of his most ardent desire, to visit him with a terrible chastisement. It will be remembered that the treasure lay buried at a central point between the tower and the tree, the chapel wall and the well. When Brown, terror struck and confounded by Sigismund's approach, snatched up spade and pick-axe, and ran wildly from the hole he had just finished filling up, he forgot, in his dismay and confusion, that the deep well, surrounded only by a low parapet, which was partially broken down, lay immediately in the direction he took. Running, as Fear is represented to do, with eyes turned over his shoulder, he stumbled against a stone, staggered—in a vain attempt to save himself from falling—several paces forward, and fell headlong into the gaping mouth of the well. It was then that he uttered the scream of horror Sigismund had heard. Had he pitched directly upon his head, he would probably have been killed upon the spot, but the sides of the well in some degree broke his fall, which was so violent, however, that his whole frame seemed shattered, and he lay for a long time stunned and senseless. Thus it was that no

groan or sound of any kind issued from the dismal pit to guide Sigismund in search of the unhappy wretch whose cry of deadly terror he had heard.

Sorely bruised and with broken bones, at the bottom of a well where none knew him to be, Anthony Brown had before him the prospect of terrible sufferings, in requital of the attempted theft whose accomplishment Sigismund had, by his sudden arrival, unconsciously prevented.

Several hours elapsed before the lawyer recovered his senses. So severe had been the fall, that it had nearly driven the last spark of life out of his body. When he at last, with a groan of pain, opened his eyes, only a faint glimmer of light shone into his living grave. Slowly collecting his scattered senses, he looked up and around him, and, when he at last understood where he was, he yelled with rage and despair. How was he ever to get out of the well? So violent was his emotion, that he relapsed into a swoon, and it was dark night when he recovered from it. Gazing upwards, he saw the stars twinkling over his head. They were all that he *could* see. As to hearing

anything, the only sounds that reached him were the rustle of leaves and the occasional hooting of an owl. He rather rejoiced than otherwise that it was no longer daylight, for he thought he could profit by the darkness to scramble out of the well and reach home unseen. Although the well was deep, and its sides perpendicular, the latter were broken and cracked in many places—as Brown remembered to have observed during his innumerable inspections of the ruins—and there could be no great difficulty for an active person to climb out, by availing himself of the fissures as hold for hand and foot. Once out of his prison, the lawyer thought he would soon find ways and means to transport the treasure to a safe hiding-place, perhaps even to his own dwelling, before the return of day should again endanger his possession of it. If he accomplished this, he would not trouble his head much about the consequences of his fall. These he at present took to amount only to a few scratches and bruises.

The unhappy wretch did not yet know half the extent of his misfortune. He had scarcely moved since he recovered his senses, and his immobility was the cause that he experienced

but trifling pain. But on making an effort to rise, the frightful suffering it occasioned him forced from him a scream of agony. When he would fain have stretched out his right arm and supported himself with it against the wall, in order to get upon his feet, the arm made a kind of snapping noise, and fell powerless by his side. It was broken, and so bad was the fracture, that, at every movement, the sharp fragments of bone tore the muscles, occasioning him inconceivable torture.

A frightful apprehension now took possession of the suffering sinner. All hopes of liberation, through his own unaided exertions, were of course knocked upon the head by the discovery that his arm was fractured. On rescue by the assistance of others he did not dare to reckon, seeing that the lonely ruins, near to which no path or road passed, were rarely visited by any one. What a terrible prospect was before him! It seemed his enevitable fate to perish miserably of hunger, to die like a dog in a hole—forsaken of all men—alone with his conscience, and with the memory of a thousand misdeeds which he had forgotten in his day of prosperity, but which now, in the hour of agony and des-

pair, filled his craven and sinful heart with unspeakable horror. What a terrible destiny was this !

When this picture of his apparently inevitable fate presented itself to his mind, Brown uttered a long moaning cry ; so mournful and despairing, that his bitterest foe, could he have heard it, would have been moved to compassion. It was long before a faint ray of hope again visited his soul. At last, however, it came. All, he thought, was not yet lost. It might chance that a wood-cutter, or a bird-catcher, or some stray loungeur might wander as far as the ruins in the course of the following day. Then he should hear the footsteps, and would shout for help. His voice would be heard, it would guide the passer-by to the mouth of the well, ropes and ladders would be brought, he would be drawn up out of the well and carried to his castle. Once there, his arm would soon get well, and then—why, the treasure might after all be his ! Who would seek it in the dark vaulted recess in which he had deposited it ? It was not so easy to find. Brown breathed again, and, with reviving hopes, his sinful and covetous instincts regained their

strength, which the fear of death had for a moment diminished. His heart was again set upon gold and iniquity. So utterly bad was this man's nature. And yet he hoped to be rescued—hoped that Heaven would take compassion upon him. A strange hope to be entertained by a man who, all his life long, in thought, word, or deed, had daily and hourly offended his Maker.

Long and painful was the night to Anthony Brown. Every minute seemed an eternity, and he had never longed for anything as he then longed for daylight. His broken arm caused him grievous suffering; his hips hurt him, and his foot, and all his limbs in a less or greater degree. Every second, as it lazily lagged by, appeared an age of anguish.

At last those stars which he was able to discern from the depth of his narrow dungeon, grew pale and gradually disappeared, and a rosy glow of light informed the prisoner that day was breaking. This was a relief. Hope brightened with the dawn, and liberation, fondly anticipated, seemed now certain and near at hand. Presently the sun rose; Brown knew this by the bright radiance which the

sky reflected into his comfortless cell ; and the birds sang and twittered joyfully amongst the foliage of the forest. Just over the prisoner's head, on the branch of a mountain ash which grew hard by the mouth of the well, a bullfinch perched itself, and strained its little throat in notes of welcome to the day.

How Brown envied that little bird ! It was free, it could fly whithersoever it listed, and hop to and fro amidst the fresh flowers and dew-steeped grass, and sing and rejoice all the morning long. Brown could do not one of those things. But then, truly, the bullfinch was a harmless little thing that had committed no sin, whereas Brown's conscience was stained and loaded with many a wicked and godless deed. The bird had a right to be gay and joyous, but Brown had no such privilege ; no gladness could find place in a heart from which virtue had long been banished.

The day wore slowly on. It got brighter and brighter over head, and the air looked warm and pleasant, but in the well it was cold enough. Brown ground his teeth with fury. Now that the daylight enabled him to examine his prison, he for the first time plainly

saw how easy it would have been for him, had he had the use of his limbs, to clamber out of the well. But the broken arm ! it was not to be thought of. And yet—it was so tempting ! The crannies and crevices, and the holes made by the falling out of stones from the lining of the well, formed almost a staircase up to the very top, and he could not but think that there was a chance, if he took a little time and patience, of his extricating himself, although with but one arm to use, out of his distressing predicament. Hope gives courage. Unheeding the pain of his broken arm, Brown made an attempt to rise to his feet. It partially succeeded : he got upon his knees, but, when he endeavoured to stand upon his feet, he actually roared with pain, and sank back, like a lump of lead, into his previous posture. His left foot, from which he had suffered more or less ever since his fall, occasioned him, when he tried to put it to the ground, unendurable anguish. The ankle joint he found to be sprained and terribly swollen. This discovery completely settled the question of escape, as far as it depended on Brown's unaided powers. Crippled hand and foot, there was nothing for

it but to lie at the bottom of the well and there await assistance, or starve if it came not.

All Brown's previous exclamations of fury and impatience, of rage and despair, were as nothing compared to those that now poured from his profane lips. He rolled his eyes and gnashed his teeth. At last, exhausted by his own passion, as much as by fasting and bodily suffering, he relapsed into silence, and lay with the look of a demon, his lips drawn back and disclosing his firmly clenched teeth, and his eyes fixed with a glassy undeviating stare upon the stones of the well side. His face was livid and distorted with pain, and from time to time he uttered deep groans or broken sentences of complaint.

"Ah!" he more than once murmured between his teeth, "what said that old sergeant? my turn would come, he said, and sure enough it has come. I am dying in torments! my limbs are crushed and powerless, and my soul is full of grief. Lord! how terribly I suffer! can there be such agony in the world! oh, oh!" and his words became an unintelligible moan, piteous in the extreme, and betokening

an extremity of suffering such as it seemed scarcely possible for human nature long to endure.

After a time his pains abated a little, and then he recommenced his violence and cursing, until fresh twinges again reduced him to lamenting his cruel fate. But presently he made an effort, and remained perfectly quiet, for he remembered that his only chance of escape was in attentively listening for the sound of a passing footstep. So he lay still, and pricked up his ears. But he heard nothing—no human voice or sound of footsteps—nothing but the breeze rustling the leaves, and the joyous song of birds. He dared not raise his thoughts to God—that God whose laws he had so repeatedly broken and trodden under foot. The unhappy wretch dared not pray. The weight of his misdeeds lay like a heavy load upon him, and stifled the words of supplication that rose to his tongue. He had forgotten God; how could he expect that God would now remember and deliver him? So he lay, alone with his evil conscience, in that damp and dismal pit.

The day approached its close, but there was

no diminution of the torments of the miserable captive ; on the contrary, they increased. He suffered terribly from thirst, which he had not a drop of water to assuage. Fever burned in his veins, which seemed full of molten lead. His bruised and shattered limbs swelled, and the agony of his sprained foot and broken arm nearly drove him mad. But even this horrible pain was more endurable than his thirst. His tongue was like a piece of parched leather, his lips were cracked, his throat and gums were of a fiery heat ; and he began to lose all hope of relief from these terrible tortures. No foot-step approached his prison, no cheering voice was audible. Brown remained alone and deserted ; none took pity on him.

When the sun went down ; when the last red tint of its setting light faded and disappeared, and evening cast its grey shadow over the castle ; when the glow-worm lit its pale-green lamp, and the birds ceased their song and betook them to roost—then did Brown lift up his voice in a final howl of despair. The day was gone, and no help had come. He was doomed to pass another night—a long, long night in his dreary, grave-like prison, and he

dared not ask himself the question whether the morrow's light would witness his release. The coolness of the night set him shivering, and his teeth chattered in his head ; to this cold chill succeeded a burning heat. The fever increased, and his thirst with it ; his pulse leaped rather than beat, his head burned, and his sufferings reached a climax. Human nature could endure no more ; he became insensible. His swoon was succeeded by a restless feverish slumber. A hundred times in the course of that night he woke up with a cry of pain, whose echoes died away unheeded in the solitude of the forest. Many times did he think he was about to be relieved from his sufferings by death ; and death would have been a boon to him. But he did not die ; he survived that fearful night ; he was fated to see another sun rise ; his cup of anguish was not yet full. Once more he saw the stars fade, and the sky grow ruddy ; once more he heard the lark carol on high, and the buzz and hum and warble of awakening life in the forest. And once more he dared to grapple himself to the hope, that in the course of this new day rescue at last might come. As upon the day before, he lay still and listened ; and,

also as upon the day before, for some hours he listened in vain. Another affliction was now added to his previous sufferings. Beside thirst, and the pain of his hurts, a craving, gnawing hunger made itself felt. Gradually his strength deserted him, and he passed from one fainting fit into another. In his intervals of consciousness, he now almost gave up hope.

Suddenly, and when he least expected it, he heard a noise which roused him to fresh life. It was a sound of men and horses ; men's voices, and horses' feet. Men were certainly approaching, and there was a tramp and clatter of hoofs. Help was at hand ! There yet was hope and life for the crippled and despairing miscreant !

"Help ! help ! help !" shouted Brown, with all the little strength that still remained to him. It was exhausted by the effort. He sank back ; his senses again left him ; the emotion had been too violent for his enfeebled frame. Succour was certainly at hand, but he was unable to invoke it. If his first cry had been unheard, if the strangers had passed on before he had recovered consciousness, it was as though they had never been. What would be the despair of the miserable man when he

regained his senses, found his cries for help unanswered, and again heard no other sounds than those of the birds and the breeze.

It was upon this same morning that a small party of dragoons entered the village of Hohenberg at a rapid trot, and halted in front of the house where Sigismund and his grandmother dwelt. The next moment Sigismund came hurrying out, and greeted, with a joyful exclamation, the worthy Captain Francis Sabertash, who, for his part, no less pleased at the meeting, jumped off his horse, and shook his young comrade heartily by the hand.

"Here I am again!" he cried; "and with news from Potsdam which I trust will prove good. Let us at once to your grandmother."

"Immediately," said Sigismund; "but these brave fellows—shall they not dismount and refresh?"

"No; the lieutenant and I have got our plan," replied Frank. "We shall remain here but a few moments, and then away to the ruins of Hohenstein—you know, to see about the treasure. I am uneasy till it is done. I was so negligent as to leave the sign unconcealed, and

one cannot tell—well, we shall see. But not a moment must be wasted.”

On reaching the sitting-room, Frank greeted Sigismund’s grandmother with his usual deep respect and affection, and then walked straight up to the black desk.

“Well,” said he, smiling, “what am I to have if I find our papers here, and at the same time a halter for the neck of the knave Brown.”

Sigismund and his grandmother looked at the speaker in much surprise.

“My good Frank,” said the latter, “what are you talking of? You know very well that there is nothing in the desk!”

“I am not so sure of that,” said Frank, laughing. “We’ll have a look, at any rate. Sigismund, support the desk behind.”

Without understanding the motive of the request, Sigismund complied with it. The captain tilted the heavy piece of furniture, so as to get the front legs off the ground, and then grasping one of them, and after several attempts, in which he exerted his utmost strength, he succeeded in unscrewing it at a place, about two-thirds of its height from the ground, which the carver’s ingenuity had art-

fully decorated with rings and scrolls, so as completely to conceal the existence of a joint or opening. In the portion of the leg thus unscrewed, a cavity appeared, large enough to contain a roll of papers of considerable size. Sabertash looked eagerly into it. It was perfectly empty.

"Gone!" exclaimed the old soldier, excessively disconcerted. "But there is another leg," he added, his hopes again reviving. He seized the other leg, but it resisted all his efforts to unscrew it, and he began to fear that it differed from its fellow, and was solid. At last the screw gave way, but not in the same place as in the companion leg. The cunning mechanic had increased the difficulty of discovery, by placing the opening considerably higher from the ground.

Sabertash almost feared to look into this second hiding-place, lest he should again be disappointed. But when he did look he uttered a shout of joy.

"Here is the plunder!" he cried, pulling out a roll of papers. "Now let us see. There, there, there, my noble lady! Here is the colonel's acknowledgement of the debt, duly cancelled; here Brown's receipt for the money! Ha,

ha! it was a good thought of mine to take a ride to Potsdam! There, madam, what say you now? There, Sigismund! Are you turned to stone, lieutenant? All is now right—your noble father's memory clear—your castle and lands your own! Hurra for Prussia and Hohenberg! and may God be merciful to the sinner Brown, for it is little enough mercy that I feel inclined to shew him!"

Sigismund was hanging on his grandmother's neck, over whose venerable countenance tears of joy now trickled.

"Did I not always say so?" he cried. "Yes, the desk, the old black desk; I never could resolve to part with it. Oh, grandmother, what good fortune! How did you discover it, Frank?—quick, tell us how!"

"By and bye," replied the old soldier, "I have no time just now—must see after the king's property—and then we will see about that nice gentleman, Mr. Brown, and plague him a little for all his misdeeds. Your turn to-day, ours to-morrow. Yes, yes; his *to-morrow* has come to him, as theirs has to the French. But now, away to Hohenstein ruins, to complete the good day's work!"

The indefatigable old soldier was in the saddle in an instant, and off at a trot in search of his military chest. The sharp pace soon took them to the ruins. Frank went straight to the well-known spot.

"This is the place," he said ; "dig here !"

The party were of course provided with the necessary implements, and, where there were so many hands, the work proceeded rapidly. In a few minutes the hole was cleared out; the place was reached where the treasure had been, but—as the reader already knows—the treasure was no longer there.

"Confusion !" exclaimed Sabertash, turning red and pale in quick succession, whilst the sweat of anxiety stood upon his brow. "Confusion! who has played me this trick?" And then, as if some secret voice or inspiration had replied to the question, "it can be none other than' Brown!" he exclaimed.

In silence and consternation Sabertash and the dragoons gazed down into the hole, where the marks left by the iron bands and nails of the chests plainly shewed that there they had been, and that at no very distant date. But

who had stolen them, and whither had they been conveyed?

Whilst the soldiers thus stood, disappointed and cast down, round the grave from which the precious spirit had risen and fled, they were suddenly surprised by a low hollow moaning, seeming to proceed from the very bowels of the earth. Frank and the dragoons listened attentively. What could it be? The dismal sounds were repeated.

"It is in yonder well," cried Frank, hurrying to the place. "Hallo!" what's the matter?" shouted he, "who is down below there?"

"Have pity on me!" replied a feeble voice. "Help me out of this terrible place, and I will confess all."

Enfeebled and altered by suffering although the voice was, Sabertash at once recognized it.

"Brown!" he cried; "is it indeed you? Knave! where have you hidden the stolen chests? Confess at once, or we leave you to die like a dog!"

"Oh, mercy, mercy!" replied the despairing voice from the bottom of the well. "Yes, I confess that I would have stolen them, but I was surprised by footsteps, hurried away, for-

got the well, and fell into it. Have compassion on me, I beseech you ! I am half starved. My arm is shattered, my foot sprained, and I cannot stir. Terribly have I suffered during two days passed in this narrow prison ! For God's dear sake, have pity upon a miserable sinner."

"Where are the chests?" thundered Frank. "First the chests, before a single hand stirs to help you. I will first put my honour in safety, and then your wretched body, if you confess. Where is the treasure ? Where is it, I say?"

"In the low ruined vault, on the right hand as you go from the tower," replied Brown, in a piteous voice. "They are still unopened and as I found them. But have mercy upon me, I beseech you !"

"Patience !" cried Frank, and hurried off with the dragoons to the vault. There, true enough, the two iron boxes were found. With exulting shouts they were carried out into broad daylight, and Frank satisfied himself that bars and locks were still uninjured, although much rusted and half eaten away by the damp of the earth.

"There, lieutenant," cried he joyfully to the

officer of dragoons, whilst he wiped the perspiration from his forehead ; “ take the chests and give me a receipt. Glad am I to be quit of the responsibility. And now we will drag yonder rogue out of his well, although in truth and earnest it is more than he deserves.”

By fastening their stirrup-leathers together, the dragoons succeeded—not without great difficulty, owing to his weak and helpless condition—in getting Brown out of the well. A pitiable object did he look—so pitiable, indeed, that even Frank, great and just as were his grounds for indignation, forbore all reproach. They carried the suffering wretch down into the village, and there lavished upon him every care, in hopes at least to save his life and give him time for the repentance of which he stood in such great need. But the violence of his fall, the severity of the fracture of his arm, the hunger, thirst, fever, and mental and bodily suffering he had endured, had reduced him to such a state that the doctors held out no hopes of his recovery.

In a few days he died. His end was hastened by the shock of learning that his fraud upon Sigismund and the baroness had been

brought to light. By this time, the matter was the talk of the whole neighbourhood ; and the nurse, who tended Brown, imprudently suffered the news to escape her. On his dying bed he confessed that he had forged the receipts produced in the court of justice as those of Colonel Hohenberg. Whilst the genuine ones were in his possession, he had applied himself to study the colonel's signature, and had succeeded in counterfeiting it so exactly, that the colonel himself might have been deceived. Having made this confession, and acknowledged the justice of the fate that had overtaken him, the wretched man closed his eyes in death. Let us hope that his tardy repentance was held availing by the merciful tribunal before which he was summoned to appear.

Upon Brown's decease, Sigismund took measures to establish his right to the castle and estates of Hohenberg. None opposed or disputed his claim, and he was formally reinstated in his property. The day upon which he again took possession of the home of his ancestors, from which he had been so long and unjustly excluded, was a day of joy not only for him and his grandmother, but for the whole popu-

lation of the village, who, in holiday attire, with flowers and music and shouts of delight, escorted to the castle gates the last survivors of the ancient and beloved family of Hohenberg.

It is scarcely necessary to say that trusty old Frank, to whose faithful attachment and determined honesty of purpose, Sigismund was indebted for the recovery of his property, accompanied his friends to their castle, and there took up his abode. In their adversity they had found him true as steel, and it seemed as natural to his simple heart as to their grateful ones, that he should share and benefit by their prosperity. And many were the happy days passed together by these three much attached friends, in the wise and temperate enjoyment of the blessings Providence had bestowed upon them.

One more incident we must record, and then our tale is told, and we may lay down the pen. A few weeks after the family had returned to the castle, a letter came, bearing, in King Frederick William's own hand-writing, the superscription—

“To Captain Francis Sabertash.”

The veteran, who had few correspondents, and to whom the receipt of a letter was an event of extreme rarity, opened his eyes to a marvellous width, as he turned the document over and over, and at last broke the seal. But, whilst reading, he twisted his mustaches so violently, that it seemed hardly possible they should retain their position upon his upper lip. Sigismund, who was standing by, watched his old friend with a smile, for he knew that the mustache-twisting was a sure sign of something very agreeable to his feelings. He was confirmed in his supposition of good news, when the old soldier at last broke out with his pet ejaculation.

“*Sapperment!*” he cried, handing the letter to Sigismund. “What a dear, good, gracious man is our noble king! here he has gone and made me a present of the Benkenstein estate, merely because I did my duty, and delivered up the military chest all safe and sound. It really is too much! I can’t think of taking it, *Sapperment!*”

But royal gifts are not to be declined by a dutiful subject, and this the new proprietor of Benkenstein was at last made to understand.

His estate, which was in the neighbourhood of Hohenberg, appeared to give him less pleasure than the reflection that his king, whom he so dearly loved, had been so kind as to think of him. In a great tall letter, couched in most respectful and loyal terms, he expressed his gratitude for his majesty's goodness. And although he could not make up his mind to leave his friends at Hohenberg, his favourite ride was over to Benkenstein, whose gates he never entered without a thought of love and gratitude to his generous sovereign.

Our story is at an end. If any who read it, learn from it the great truth that patience and fortitude, honesty and courage, resignation and trust in Providence, are the best and surest means to convert adversity into prosperity, it will not have failed of its purpose, or have been written altogether in vain.

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